

# UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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## PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON FOOD SAFETY FOOD SAFETY STRATEGIC PLAN

Tuesday, November 10, 1998  
Schaumburg Marriott  
Salons F-J  
50 North Martingale  
Schaumburg, Illinois

Pages: 1 through 144  
Place: Schaumburg, Illinois  
Date: November 10, 1998

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## HERITAGE REPORTING CORPORATION

*Official Reporters*  
1220 L Street, NW, Suite 600  
Washington, D.C.  
(202) 628-4888

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# PROCEEDINGS

MR. O'HARA: If I could get us started. As the first order of business let me ask or invite anyone who wants to, to join us at the table. We have plenty of seats there and --

MR. LEVITT: We're lonely.

MR. O'HARA: We are lonely. And we really would very much like to have everyone join in the conversation today. So please feel free.

Again, good morning. My name is Jim O'Hara. I'm the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health for the Department of Health and Human Services.

I and my colleagues would like to welcome you today to our third of four public hearings focusing on the charge to the President's Council on Food Safety to develop a Strategic Food Safety Plan.

We think it's very appropriate that as one of the first orders of business the President's Council should invite the public to participate in our process of looking out into the future and asking ourselves some very hard questions about what we need to do to improve this nation's food safety.

Our process will be an open process. It really is important for us to have all of you participate. And that is why we have tried to arrange the room as much as

1 possible to make this a conversation.

2 We can rightfully take pride that our nation's  
3 food supply is one of the safest in the world. But we know  
4 that we can do better. And that is our task today. And  
5 that is our task over the long run.

6 Americans' food habits are changing. The  
7 diversity of the foods we eat today, the manner in which  
8 they are prepared, your expectations of the quality and  
9 wholesomeness of your food are vastly different from what  
10 they were at the turn of the century.

11 Our population is changing. We are graying. I  
12 know that from personal experience. We're becoming more  
13 ethnically diverse. By the year 2030 there will be 70  
14 million older persons in this country. That's more than  
15 twice the number in 1996. By the year 2010 almost one-half  
16 of our school-age population will be from minority groups.

17  
18 Our food safety system must also take into  
19 account the growing diversity of our food sources. Since  
20 1985 food imports have tripled. That means new challenges  
21 for our regulatory systems.

22 How should the food safety system reflect and  
23 respond to these dramatic changes? Since the very first  
24 months of this administration President Clinton and  
25 President -- and Vice-President Gore have demonstrated

1 vision and leadership in efforts to improve the safety of  
2 the nation's food supply.

3 Many of you will remember the tragedy of the E.  
4 coli 0157H7 outbreak on the west coast in early 1993 and how  
5 the administration and the Department of Agriculture quickly  
6 understood the need to improve the safety of our food supply  
7 and acted decisively and quickly.

8 Later in 1993 the Vice-President's Re-invention  
9 Of Government Report called for more emphasis on prevention,  
10 called for the issuing of passive regulations.

11 This year the President has created the Council  
12 on Food Safety. These are all important steps but we know  
13 more needs to be done.

14 When the President signed the executive order  
15 creating the Food Safety Council in August he gave the  
16 Council a clear charge to improve the safety of the food  
17 supply through science-based regulation, well coordinated  
18 inspection, enforcement, research and education programs.

19 Specifically, and why we are here today, the  
20 Council was given the charge to develop a comprehensive,  
21 strategic plan to integrate the federal efforts with those  
22 of state and local governments, as well as the private  
23 sector.

24 This process had actually begun back in May, 1997  
25 when the Vice-President released the report, Food Safety

1 From Farm To Table. This job will now be completed by the  
2 Food Safety Council.

3 We will develop a plan that is results oriented.  
4 For the first time comprehensive food safety plan for the  
5 administration will be tied to the budget process across all  
6 the relevant departments.

7 Our comprehensive plan will not only focus on  
8 microbial hazards, but address issues associated with other  
9 hazards, such as the chemicals that contribute to food borne  
10 illness.

11 The Council was also given the charge by the  
12 President to oversee food safety research activities across  
13 federal government. This was a process that was initiated  
14 last year through the National Science and Technology  
15 Council. It was further advanced by the President's  
16 directive last summer to develop the Joint Institute For  
17 Food Safety Research.

18 For the past year the NSTC has been developing an  
19 inventory of federal food safety research projects. This  
20 inventory will be used to support the work of the Institute  
21 as it develops its inter-agency food safety research plan  
22 and make important connections with the private sector and  
23 the universities.

24 The basis for all that we will do and all that we  
25 should do has to be sound science. Most of us take that for

1 granted, but we shouldn't. There are those who would  
2 challenge that. But it is central to improving the nation's  
3 food safety system and its safety.

4 The President also asked the council to provide  
5 him with an assessment of the very important National  
6 Academy of Science Report, which was issued in September.

7 The Academy has done an excellent job in framing  
8 many of the questions that we must try to answer and in  
9 developing important issues that we will have to address.

10 One of the questions that we will ask you today  
11 is how we should view that report and its recommendations.  
12 It really is going to be very important in our strategic  
13 planning process. And your response to that report will  
14 help us.

15 We are fortunate to have today -- and it really  
16 does show the commitment of this administration -- senior  
17 officials from across the administration.

18 And let me just briefly introduce my colleagues  
19 who are with me here today.

20 First, from the Environmental Protection Agency,  
21 Jim Aidala. From Department of Agriculture, Caren Wilcox.  
22 From FSIS and the Department of Agriculture, Maggie Glavin.  
23 From CDC, a part of HHS, Morrie Potter. And from FDA, Joe  
24 Levitt.

25 We very much hope to make today a day of



1 discussion, a day when we can have a real conversation among  
2 ourselves.

3 To give you just a few logistics of the day,  
4 after I wind up Jim, Caren and myself will try to elaborate  
5 a little bit on our Vision Statement, which is there at the  
6 head of the room. We'll do that very briefly.

7 We then outlined six questions. They were  
8 published in the Federal Register notice. And they're an  
9 attempt to take the day and to flesh out your response to  
10 our Vision Statement.

11 There will be a short break this morning. There  
12 will be a lunch break. There will be a short break this  
13 afternoon.

14 At around 2:45 there is going to be time for  
15 public statements. Because we've had such a good turnout  
16 today we would ask you during that time for the public  
17 statement to try to make your remarks as brief as possible,  
18 around three, maybe five minutes at the most.  
19 Remember that anything that you say today you can supplement  
20 with a written statement. And we are very much taking into  
21 account the written statements that people are submitting to  
22 the dockets. So understand that today is, if you will, the  
23 beginning of our conversation.

24 Let me finish by again trying to emphasize that  
25 we view this as an open process. We will succeed only if we

1 all work together. We will succeed only if all of you are  
2 our partners. Because food safety really is about a  
3 partnership, is about shared responsibility.

4 And it's important that we hear what is critical  
5 to you. Because when we develop our plan we need to be  
6 responsive to you.

7 Again, let me thank you for coming today. Let me  
8 thank you for taking the time out of I know are busy lives,  
9 hectic schedules to participate.

10 And with that, let me turn it over to Jim.

11 MR. LEVITT: Thank you, Jim. Again, as Jim just  
12 mentioned -- and we can't say it often enough -- we'd like  
13 to thank everybody for coming here to today's meeting to  
14 help with the strategic planning process for improving the  
15 safety of the country's food supply.

16 I know this is obviously a very important and  
17 exciting opportunity to look ahead to the choices that will  
18 shape the food safety system over the next ten years.  
19 Now, these choices will obviously affect the quality of  
20 every American's life.

21 The three primary food safety agencies, USDA, HHS  
22 and EPA have made many strides forward in building a  
23 strength in food safety system. But there are still  
24 challenges unmet and many opportunities not fully realized.

25 Last July -- Jim started talking a little bit

1 about this -- we took the first steps to lay that groundwork  
2 for the development of a comprehensive strategic food safety  
3 plan, a plan that will identify the opportunities and design  
4 the best approaches for successfully overcoming the  
5 challenges we face.

6 Jim O'Hara, Caren Wilcox and I together with  
7 other staff we have here from those agencies and officials  
8 from other federal agencies will begin writing the draft  
9 Vision Statement that we're discussing today.

10 I'm going to talk a little bit about the Vision  
11 Statement that again is at the head of the room. Let me  
12 read it out loud for those that can't see it well, either  
13 because of the contrasting colors or because of, I guess,  
14 another sign of aging among us who can't see the print  
15 right.

16 Well, let me read it aloud for everybody. And  
17 again, this is our draft statement and this is a real  
18 central part of our discussion.

19 "Consumers can be competent that food is safe,  
20 healthy and affordable. We work within a seamless food  
21 safety system that uses a farm to table preventive  
22 strategies and integrated research, surveillance, inspection  
23 and enforcement.

24 "We are vigilant to new and emergent threats and  
25 consider the needs of vulnerable populations. We use

1 science and risk-based approaches, along with public-private  
2 partnerships. Food is safe because everyone understands and  
3 accepts their responsibilities."

4 Again, this is our draft Vision Statement. Now,  
5 a vision is a starting point for any serious strategic  
6 planning effort. A vision can help pull together the  
7 efforts of all of the many important groups that have a  
8 stake in the food safety system.

9 It should establish a challenging and even an  
10 inspiring goal. We want the Vision Statement to point out  
11 specific directions that all of us need to work on together.

12 Clearly, the Vision Statement will only be the  
13 beginning. But all of us hope that it will give everyone a  
14 chance to reaffirm the shared commitment to making sure that  
15 our nation's food supply is the best it can be.

16 Although the Vision Statement we prepared  
17 contains only 72 words, it's packed with a number of  
18 different ideas that fit into three broad themes, themes  
19 that relate to the work of all of the agencies you see here.

20 I will elaborate on the first theme, a safe and  
21 affordable food supply. Jim will discuss the theme,  
22 Assuring Safer Food Requires Everyone To Play A Role. Let  
23 me say that again. I gummed that up. Jim's -- giving Jim  
24 his buildup here. But Assuring Safe Food Requires Everyone  
25 To Play A Role.

1                   And Caren Wilcox will explore the theme,  
2     Protecting The Food Supply Must Be Grounded In Sound  
3     Science.

4                   Now, what does it mean to say that food is safe  
5     and healthy? As used in this Vision Statement we intend  
6     that food safety have a very broad meaning. We intend that  
7     safety encompasses the prevention of a wide range of  
8     potential hazards in the water we use and the food we eat.

9                   Certainly, the emphasis on the dangers of  
10    microbial contamination will continue. We need to make sure  
11    that our food and water are free from microbes like E. coli,  
12    Salmonella, cyclosporeae, Cryptosporidium, and other  
13    pathogens.

14                  But our food supply would also -- must also be  
15    protected from risks caused by unsafe level of chemicals,  
16    such as pesticides, veterinary drugs, food additives and  
17    industrial contaminants.

18                  We must take steps to assure that food and water  
19    are safe for the entire population. Everyone eats. And  
20    some groups are more vulnerable than others.

21                  Infants and children, for example, consume  
22    greater amounts of food in relation to their body weight  
23    than do adults. At the same time their immune systems are  
24    not as fully developed. As a result, infants and young  
25    children may be partially sensitive and particularly

1 sensitive to the effects of E. coli or certain pesticide  
2 residues.

3 The size of our older population, the aging  
4 population, is also growing. And they tend to have more  
5 health problems that may make them more vulnerable to food  
6 or water-borne illness.

7 And finally, there are people who suffer from  
8 diseases that leave their bodies less able to resist  
9 potentially harmful chemical and microbial exposures. All  
10 of these sensitive groups must be protected.

11 At the same time we also want food to be healthy  
12 and nutritious. Our food safety system must assure that the  
13 food we eat nourishes us, that it meets not only individual  
14 caloric and protein needs, but also supplies the vitamins,  
15 minerals and other micro-nutrients that enable children to  
16 grow and adults to live active, healthy lives.

17 Unfortunately, even today there are people who  
18 are undernourished. Healthy food means not only providing  
19 needed nutrients, but also providing access to foods and the  
20 information that allows consumers to select healthful foods  
21 for themselves and their families.

22 Everybody remembers the old maxim, An ounce of  
23 prevention is worth a pound of cure. Nothing could be truer  
24 for food safety. Our food safety system must prevent  
25 problems, not just react only after harm has occurred.

1           Such prevention based approaches are more  
2 inherently fair and ultimately they're both more successful  
3 and more economically efficient.

4           Beyond using our known technologies to prevent  
5 problems, we must recognize that the very nature of our food  
6 safety problems has changed dramatically in the last ten  
7 years and will continue to change in the coming decade.

8           The way food is grown, processed and distributed  
9 has undergone drastic changes. And the forces that have  
10 propelled the changes, new technologies and globalization of  
11 the food production system continue to transform the food  
12 industry.

13           Many of our efforts over the past few years have  
14 been to address problems that have emerged from this newly  
15 transformed system.

16           You must build the capacity to identify and to  
17 respond rapidly to new threats to the safety of the food  
18 supply.

19           So far that's a discussion of the safe and  
20 healthy part of the food supply. Let me turn to a third and  
21 equally important part, an affordable food supply.

22           We believe that the food supply must not be only  
23 safe but also affordable. Public policy should continue to  
24 make sure that food prices are reasonable so that everyone  
25 can enjoy the benefits of safe and healthy food.

1           Fortunately, American agriculture is the best in  
2     the world and is able to produce an abundant and varied  
3     supply of food at prices which are among the lowest in the  
4     world.

5           The notion of affordability also impacts choices  
6     about how to assure that that food is safe. No government  
7     or business decision that improves safety can be so  
8     expensive to implement that it raises the price of food  
9     prohibitively.

10          So we must see government use common sense so the  
11     required safety practices do not put the basic necessity of  
12     an adequate diet beyond the reach of any person.

13          Consumer confidence is another key element of the  
14     vision of a food safety system. It is not enough to have a  
15     food supply that experts would say is safe. Consumers must  
16     believe that their food is -- and water are safe.

17          Without consumer confidence there will be greater  
18     unpredictability in the marketplace. And small incidents  
19     can cause significant dislocations.

20          We all know of examples that illustrate how  
21     volatile purchasing patterns can be in a climate where the  
22     public lacks confidence.

23          Everyone already understands, at least  
24     intuitively, what will help build and maintain public  
25     confidence. First, you must have a system that consistently



1 delivers safe food and water. But it's also critically  
2 important how that system operates.

3 For government's part policy making must be  
4 transparent. That is, people must be able to figure out  
5 what the government requires and why we require it. Also,  
6 government must be open and participatory. All stakeholders  
7 and particularly, consumer interests must have access to the  
8 decision-making process.

9 Another important aspect of consumer confidence  
10 is the availability of information to guide public choices.  
11 The companies that grow, process and deliver food can play a  
12 much greater role in making information available to  
13 consumers so that they can make a better choice with respect  
14 to safety.

15 And in conclusion we believe that every  
16 stakeholder can agree that we need to assure a safe, healthy  
17 and affordable food supply. We might not all agree yet on  
18 how to reach that goal. We believe it is an important and  
19 critical first step to discuss this fundamental and  
20 important goal and how everyone can subscribe to it.

21 MR. O'HARA: Thank you, Jim.

22 As Jim said, the Vision Statement has 72 words,  
23 but has, we believe, a lot of ideas in it. An important  
24 theme that we hope runs throughout the Vision Statement is  
25 that food safety requires everyone to play a role.

1           That, in fact, has been one of the driving  
2 principles of the administration's efforts, from the Food  
3 Safety Initiative to the creation of the Food Safety  
4 Council.

5           Whether it's CDC, FDA, USDA, EPA or any of the  
6 other government -- federal government agencies, all of us  
7 have important roles to play in assuring the safety of food.

8           It is important that all the agencies communicate  
9 well to each other, whether it be about research or the  
10 evaluation of science, about assessing risks, about  
11 responding to outbreaks or development of policy and  
12 regulations.

13           That, in fact, has been a main focus of the  
14 President's Food Safety Initiative in the past year. We  
15 believe that we have taken some important steps and have  
16 achieved some successes.

17           For instance, the Food-borne Outbreak Response  
18 Coordinating Group, known affectionately to those of us who  
19 work on it as Force G -- it's an inter-agency group that  
20 also includes state and local partners. It's been an  
21 attempt to ensure that our responses to multi-state food-  
22 borne outbreaks are as efficient and as quick as possible.

23           Another example of this kind of inter-agency work  
24 which we hope to build on in our Strategic Planning Process  
25 has been the inter-agency workgroup on research, which I

1 mentioned a few minutes earlier.

2 Operating under both the Office of Science and  
3 Technology Policy Led Workgroup, and now the newly created  
4 Joint Institute for Food Safety Research, the administration  
5 has tried very hard to make certain that all of our research  
6 efforts are coordinated and leveraged.

7 Another example of this kind of important sharing  
8 of responsibility is the Inter-Agency Risk Assessment  
9 Consortium. It brings together the expertise of executive  
10 branch agencies, along with experts from universities to  
11 establish the best science possible on assessing the risks  
12 of food supply and countering them. We know that we need to  
13 put our resources where the risk is greatest.

14 Today's meeting is another good example of what  
15 we are trying to achieve, of the theme of everyone accepting  
16 their responsibility. Each of you sitting out there,  
17 sitting here at the table with us has a responsibility, just  
18 like we do.

19 Important partners, essential partners in this  
20 effort are our state and local partners. The federal  
21 government can't do it all. And we shouldn't try. We  
22 really do need the help of the state and local Departments  
23 of Public Health, Departments of Agriculture, the equivalent  
24 of the EPA. All of those who at the state and local level  
25 have responsibility for food safety are our partners.

1           Again, we have, we believe, laid a solid  
2     foundation here. More states than ever are adopting the  
3     model food code. Localities are also using the model food  
4     code to guide their efforts.

5           This message of working with state and local  
6     governments has come to us loud and clear from many voices,  
7     whether it be the recommendation of the Association of Food  
8     and Drug Officials or the recently released National Academy  
9     of Science Report that I referred to earlier.

10           They all say the same thing, federal government,  
11     state and local governments all have to be full partners.

12           Another example of how we have tried to do this  
13     is a recent meeting that was held in Kansas City with the  
14     Food and Drug Administration, USDA, EPA and officials from  
15     all 50 states and the territories and the District of  
16     Columbia. It was a very important meeting to build the kind  
17     of partnerships and coordination that we are going to need  
18     as we go into the 21st century.

19           At that meeting areas targeted for further  
20     discussion and development ranged from uniform analytical  
21     methodology, shared use of analytical laboratories,  
22     coordination of responses to food-borne outbreaks,  
23     integration of inspection resources where appropriate and  
24     feasible.

25           Another example of an attempt to bring better

1 coordination and also to really drive home the message of  
2 shared responsibility is, in fact, the HACCP Systems, which  
3 FDA and USDA are implementing.

4 Whether it be seafood or meat and poultry, the  
5 message of HACCP indicant to science-based and prevention is  
6 that everyone has a role, everyone has a responsibility in  
7 assuring the safety of our food supply.

8 The benefits are clear. We will be able to take  
9 our resources, whether they be at the federal level or the  
10 state and local level, and leverage them and do more.

11 So far I've spoken about the role of government.  
12 But government isn't the only partner in assuring food  
13 safety. Industry has a role. All components of industry  
14 must continue their efforts to meet the goal of improving  
15 the safety of the food supply.

16 We know that the key is prevention from farm to  
17 processors to the grocery store. At each step in between we  
18 have to put in place effective systems of preventive  
19 controls.

20 Let me give you a few examples of what industry  
21 can do and of what industry is doing. Processors and  
22 farmers can provide training in hygiene. Facilities can  
23 support hygienic practices for their farm and plant workers.  
24 Grocery stores can provide information on safe food  
25 handling. Restaurants and food service facilities can put

1 food code recommendations into place in their operation.

2 Many in industry are already taking these steps.  
3 We applaud them. But more needs to be done. There is a  
4 final partner in this chain, an important partner, all of  
5 us, the consumer.

6 All of us know that it is possible to take what  
7 is an otherwise safe food product, mishandle it at home and  
8 make people sick.

9 We have tried in the past several years, and  
10 especially beginning last year with the Fight Back campaign,  
11 to put in place education programs that provide every  
12 consumer with the information and the knowledge of the  
13 practices they should take to minimize risks in their own  
14 kitchens.

15 The messages are messages that all of us have  
16 heard from our mothers and fathers and aunts and uncles and  
17 whoever cooked us a dinner or a breakfast when we were a  
18 child: cook foods thoroughly, keep hot foods hot, cold  
19 foods cold, avoid cross-contamination. These are all  
20 seemingly simple things to do, but they are vitally  
21 important things to do, as well.

22 So the real thrust of our Vision Statement in one  
23 respect -- and it's a thrust that we need to hear from you  
24 what more we should do, what more we should ask -- is for  
25 all of us to take responsibility for our role for food

1 safety. Because food safety is finally the joint  
2 responsibility of the government, of the consumer, of  
3 industry.

4 Caren?

5 MS. WILCOX: Thank you, Jim.

6 It is a pleasure to be here with all of my  
7 colleagues. And we are, as you learned so far, very intent  
8 on learning from all of you at this important meeting as we  
9 begin a comprehensive strategic federal food safety plan.

10 One of my tasks here today is to talk just a few  
11 minutes about the part of the Vision Statement that  
12 addresses the importance of science.

13 The President's Science Advisor, Neal Lane has  
14 said recently, Sound science must underpin all of our food  
15 safety efforts. This is important for two major reasons.

16 First, science must guide our program and policy  
17 decisions. And second, the application of science holds  
18 real promise for major improvements in food safety from farm  
19 to table.

20 Continued investment in food safety research will  
21 provide the information we need to make better decisions and  
22 it will provide the technologies to prevent or at least to  
23 reduce food-borne diseases.

24 The Vision Statement says, We work within a  
25 seamless food safety system that uses farm to table

1 preventive strategies and integrated research, surveillance,  
2 inspection and enforcement. We are vigilant to new and  
3 emergent threats and consider the needs of vulnerable  
4 populations. We use science and risk-based approaches,  
5 along with public-private partnerships.

6 It's clear that within such a seamless system  
7 science must guide our food safety priorities, whether we're  
8 talking about research, regulation or surveillance.

9 With scarce resources we must set our priorities  
10 in all three areas wisely based on the best science  
11 available.

12 What are the most critical food safety threats?  
13 What methods will work best to attack them? These are the  
14 types of questions we must answer through science. We also  
15 must use science to set good food safety policies.

16 For example, science-based HACCP systems are  
17 being widely adopted as a means of preventing contamination  
18 from pathogens and other hazards in meat, poultry, seafood  
19 and fruit juices.

20 Unfortunately, we don't always have all the  
21 information we need to make every food safety decision. The  
22 best we can do is make decisions based on the information we  
23 have available today and invest in research that will fill  
24 the information gaps.

25 If we are to achieve the seamless prevention



1 based integrated food safety system in the Vision Statement  
2 we will need a better understanding of pathogens in food and  
3 what interventions can be implemented farm to table to help  
4 control them.

5 By the same token, we need to push forward the  
6 scientific frontiers in our understanding of the risks posed  
7 by chemical residues in food and water.

8 We need better methods to estimate exposure and  
9 risks to special groups, such as children and the elderly  
10 that may be more sensitive to the effects of pathogens,  
11 pesticides and other hazardous contaminants.

12 We also need to better understand the potential  
13 for chemicals to affect the endocrine, immune and nervous  
14 systems.

15 At the same time new food safety challenges  
16 continue to emerge as a result of factors such as changing  
17 food habits, a global food supply and a changing population.

18 Emerging pathogens are testing our ability to  
19 respond quickly and effectively. Just think about the  
20 impact of E. coli 0157H7, a pathogen that was virtually  
21 unknown 15 years ago, but is now unfortunately a household  
22 name.

23 A critical review of the federally supported  
24 portfolio of food safety research has already begun through  
25 the National Science and Technology Council and will

1 continue as a result of the new Joint Institute for Food  
2 Safety Research, about which Jim spoke, the President having  
3 issued an executive order in July creating that institute.

4 Well, we have a lot of work to do before we can  
5 honestly say that we have made a coordinated and cooperative  
6 food safety research strategy and that we are making the  
7 best use of public-private partnerships to further that  
8 strategy.

9 There is a great deal of discussion going on  
10 between the public and private entities doing this research.  
11 And we're hopeful that we will be able to enhance that  
12 cooperation.

13 Under the President's National Food Safety  
14 Initiative I can speak for all the participating agencies  
15 when I say that we are committed to using science and risk-  
16 based approaches to assure the public of the highest level  
17 of safety we can attain.

18 I was also pleased that the recently published  
19 report from the National Academy of Sciences ensuring safe  
20 food from production to consumption further supports the  
21 science-based directions we are taking. And we hope to hear  
22 some of your comments about that study today.

23 In closing, I want to offer a specific example,  
24 perhaps a prototype of this seamless food safety system that  
25 uses science and risk-based approaches. It is our strategy

1 to address the public health problem associated with  
2 Salmonella enteritidis in eggs and egg products.

3 Epidemiological data from the Centers for Disease  
4 Control and Prevention showed there was an increasing  
5 problem with infections of Salmonella associated with these  
6 products.

7 A multi-disciplinary team from government and  
8 academia conducted a quantitative microbial risk assessment  
9 to characterize the adverse health effects associated with  
10 consuming eggs and egg products contaminated with the  
11 pathogen and to help us identify interventions that could  
12 lead to public health improvements.

13 Through public meetings the industry, consumers  
14 and the scientific community offer data and advice. FSIS  
15 and FDA then publish jointly an advance notice of proposed  
16 rule making to initiate a comprehensive and coordinated  
17 process to address this public health problem.

18 Cooperative endeavors with industry and other  
19 regulatory agencies sharing the responsibility for food  
20 safety will characterize our approach now and in the future.  
21 But this approach will only work if we have good scientific  
22 information with which to work.

23 Now that we have described the three theme  
24 contained in the Vision Statement we will begin a  
25 facilitated discussion of the draft Vision Statement.

1           We see the Vision Statement as a starting point  
2   and thus, a good place to begin the strategic planning  
3   process. We're here today to listen to all of you. We want  
4   to receive as much input as possible from all of our  
5   constituencies.

6           This public process is absolutely necessary to  
7   ensure that we arrive at a strategic plan that has a broad  
8   base of support across the nation.

9           We have developed six questions to help  
10   facilitate and provide a framework for the discussion and  
11   have allocated a certain amount of time for each question.  
12   They are outlined on your agenda.

13           We recognize -- and they were in the Federal  
14   Register notice, of course. We recognize that many people  
15   have requested time to present their views. And we will be  
16   as flexible as we can to honor these requests within the  
17   time constraints. And we hope you will try as much as  
18   possible to speak to the six questions.

19           Let's now concentrate on the first question.  
20   We'll do that before the break. And then we'll go ahead  
21   with the others.

22           Question 1: Does the Vision Statement accurately  
23   depict an achievable food safety system vision? What  
24   modifications, if any, would you make?

25           With that question in mind let's start on the

1 discussion. Anybody want to make a comment first?

2 Nancy?

3 MR. WOLFF: Yes, I have a question. On your food  
4 safety --

5 MR. O'HARA: Could you -- for the record, could  
6 you please identify yourself?

7 MR. WOLFF: My name is Thomas Wolff. I live in  
8 Elmhurst, Illinois. On your food safety who depicts -- who  
9 watches out for food safety?

10 MS. WILCOX: Well, I think that's part of the  
11 discussion, sir. Because there are multiple agencies across  
12 the United States that watch out for food safety.  
13 There are elements of food safety inspection at the  
14 Department of Agriculture. And there are elements of  
15 inspection and oversight at the Food and Drug  
16 Administration, which is at HHS. And then, of course, the  
17 states and many localities have their own staff do that,  
18 yes.

19 MR. WOLFF: The healthy farmers should look out  
20 of food safety, basically. There's a lot of elderly people  
21 who are eating out. They're not fixing their meals at home.  
22 They're eating in restaurants. Some of the restaurants I  
23 have visited in the last six months are deplorable.

24 Talking about food safety. I reported one  
25 restaurant five times. They're still there. They're still

1     doing the same thing. They know exactly when the  
2     inspector's leaving there, they know when he's going to get  
3     there. After he leaves they go right back to the same  
4     thing.

5                 This is called education. We don't start  
6     educating the people who own these restaurants there's going  
7     to be a lot more people getting sick.

8                 Last night alone I sat in one restaurant and had  
9     a cup of coffee, watched one of the managers handling money  
10    at the cash register, go over to help the waitress out, pick  
11    up a piece of watermelon with his hands and put it on the  
12    plate and serve it.

13                I've seen the same people in the same restaurant  
14    after a basket of rolls had been brought back from the table  
15    and dumped into the same amount of rolls where all the fresh  
16    rolls are against the health standards, safety code. I seen  
17    a girl last night drop a roll on the floor, pick it up and  
18    put it in the basket and serve it.

19                We're going to have to educate people and educate  
20    these restaurants, either that or shut them down. I called  
21    the Health Department five times. The fifth time I wanted  
22    to speak to the person's boss. I spoke to the person's boss  
23    and I told him about this. He said, Well, all the  
24    restaurants are doing that. I said, Does that make it  
25    right. That scares me when somebody from a health

1 department makes a statement like that.

2 MS. WILCOX: Thank you.

3 MS. LOCHER-BUSSARD: I just want to make a  
4 comment. I can't understand why you keep going back. But  
5 one of the things that works really well is the bottom.  
6 Food is safe because everyone understands their  
7 responsibility, accepts their responsibility.

8 And I have found that I had a bigger impact when  
9 you go up to the person and say, I'm sorry that you're  
10 handling money and you're also handling food. And they look  
11 at you. If individuals will do this it works along the  
12 chain.

13 MR. WOLFF: I don't eat at the restaurant, ma'am.  
14 I just watch them. And then I report them.

15 MS. WILCOX: Thank you. I think Ms. Donely would  
16 like to go ahead and comment on the statement.

17 MS. DONELY: Thank you. I'm Nancy Donely from  
18 the STOP, Safe Tables Our Priority. I am going -- I'd like  
19 to focus on a couple of things.

20 First of all, is that this -- the name of this  
21 committee, this council is the President's Food Safety  
22 Council. There is nothing in there regarding affordability,  
23 which is part of what this Vision Statement has included in  
24 it.

25 I think that that is a mistake on the part of the

1 way this Vision Statement was crafted. I think it dilutes  
2 what it is we're trying to do here.

3 This was created because -- in response to  
4 continuing food-borne illness outbreaks and food-borne  
5 illness deaths.

6 The overarching goal of this council should be  
7 one to protect the public's health. And therefore, I do not  
8 feel that affordable has any -- affordability has any merit  
9 for being in this particular vision.

10 I hate to see the day that we build a safety  
11 level and we are limited by the fact of how affordable it is  
12 to people. I know many of the people here today. But I am  
13 going to -- many people I haven't met.

14 I wish that someone had -- the affordability  
15 issue to me is particularly offensive because my only child  
16 died from eating contaminated food. I cannot tell -- I find  
17 it very offensive that we would even consider building a  
18 food safety system to a certain level of affordability. I  
19 can't put a value on my child's life and I don't think any  
20 risk assessor can, either.

21 So that -- my point here is that I want to bring  
22 us back to what we are doing here today. And that we are  
23 the -- this is talking about the President's Food Safety  
24 Council. And I think that's where we should be directing  
25 our efforts.



1 MR. O'HARA: Very good.

2 MS. WILCOX: Thank you.

3 Are there other comments about whether the Vision  
4 Statement depicts an achievable food safety system vision?

5 Okay.

6 MS. ROBERTS: I'm Sue Roberts. And I'm here with  
7 three hats. One, I'm consumer. Two, I'm guest of CSPI,  
8 Center for Science in the Public Interest. And three, I'm a  
9 food and nutrition professional. I have a degree in food  
10 and nutrition and a masters in a preventive medicine and  
11 environmental health.

12 And as I looked at the statement, I have some  
13 comments on different parts of the statement. So I'd like  
14 to make those.

15 And I'm so glad to hear when you talk about food  
16 safety you're making it all-encompassing. Because I don't  
17 think the issues are just pathogens in food and things like  
18 that. It has to do with -- and I think we should include  
19 biogenetic engineering and some of those issues when we're  
20 talking about food safety.

21 So I encourage you to really be totally  
22 encompassing when we're talking about food safety. We have  
23 a chance now to really look at our food system under the  
24 guise of food safety. And I think all of those are food  
25 safety issues.

1           In addition, I think that environmental  
2 sustainability needs to be directed here. I realize that  
3 I'm bringing up something that's a -- I'm just encouraging  
4 that the dialogue be started and that as issues are looked  
5 at, that that issue is not completely pushed under the rug.

6           For example, we're running -- you know, at some  
7 point we're going to run out of natural resources. And I  
8 use in talks when I talk the example of a strawberry that  
9 has five calories. But it takes 500 fossil fuel calories to  
10 ship it from California to New York. And those issues have  
11 to be started looking at, in addition to all of the other  
12 food safety issues when we're looking at this.

13           In all the material that I read as I was  
14 reviewing these issues, education kept coming up. And you  
15 spoke about it, Mr. O'Hara. And I didn't see education in  
16 the Vision Statement.

17           So in the second statement I would suggest that  
18 it add education because a lot of the stuff in all the  
19 narratives from, like, the NAS report and stuff like that it  
20 had education. And I would think this Vision Statement  
21 should have education.

22           And when we talk about education that education  
23 is not just how to handle food -- for consumers, for  
24 example, how to handle food in our homes. It's about how to  
25 really know if you're buying wholesome food.

1                   Now, it's -- there's a lot of issues in  
2   wholesomeness when it comes to poultry or whatever we're  
3   buying.

4                   We talk about vigilance. The third statement  
5   talks about vigilance to new and emerging threats and the  
6   technology. And I think that sometimes the technology  
7   itself that we're trying to vigilantly get rid of pathogens  
8   or whatever, may have its own threat.

9                   And I would want the government to be sure that  
10   we have as much vigilance looking at the technology that  
11   we're trying to implement as we do at the original threat.  
12   And I'm talking about, you know, not all of us maybe think  
13   that irradiation of food is one of the best ways to get rid  
14   of pathogens. And those kinds of issues.

15                  And then lastly, the fifth statement should  
16   include when it talks about food is safe because everyone  
17   understands and accepts their responsibility, I think that  
18   full disclosure is critical in all issues of our food  
19   system.

20                  And full disclosure -- food labeling is done a  
21   lot. But it should tell us exactly how a food is processed.  
22   Don't keep letting the food irradiation symbol get smaller  
23   and smaller so that none of us can see it who are getting  
24   older and older.

25                  Or what about biogenetic engineering? You know,

1 things -- that's done now. And we don't know when we're  
2 buying a product. And I, as a consumer, may choose to buy  
3 or not buy that product. If you're not telling me that  
4 product's been treated I can't make an intelligent decision.

5 So full disclosure of all processes should be  
6 encouraged in this system. Thank you.

7 MS. WILCOX: Thank you.

8 Ms. Doneth?

9 MS. DONETH: I'm Sue Doneth. I'm with STOP, Safe  
10 Tables Our Priority. I have the dubious distinction of  
11 being the mother of two victims of food-borne illness. I  
12 have one daughter who suffered from hepatitis-A from frozen  
13 strawberries in a school lunch and another daughter who was  
14 an E. coli 0157H7 victim that went into hemolytic uremic  
15 syndrome.

16 I have some problems, I guess, with the last  
17 sentence of the Vision Statement referring to, you know,  
18 food is safe because everyone understands and accepts their  
19 responsibilities.

20 I think that when we -- I think that it's a  
21 mistake when we focus -- when we're focusing the  
22 responsibility for this too much on the consumer end.

23 The whole premise of this is a farm to fork  
24 approach. And I think that there is very little focused on  
25 the farm and there's a whole lot focused on the fork, when

1     it gets to the consumer and educating the consumer how to  
2     protect themselves.

3                 As a consumer I don't accept the fact that it's  
4     my responsibility to cook cow feces out of meat. I don't  
5     think that should be my responsibility.

6                 Education is very important. But I think one  
7     thing that continually gets lost in these consumer education  
8     messages is it's not the silver bullet.

9                 I was the victim -- or my -- I had one daughter  
10    that was a victim of food-borne illness. I became very  
11    involved in this issue. And I was a food safety advocate  
12    for 18 months. I'm pretty educated as a consumer about how  
13    to protect my family. And lightening struck my family  
14    twice.

15                So I think we need to be very careful about  
16    trying to focus the responsibility or putting the onus too  
17    much on the consumer to clean up, you know, the process.  
18    There are so many steps in between the farm and the fork  
19    that aren't getting enough attention and too much on the  
20    other end.

21                MS. WILCOX: There was somebody over here before.  
22    And then I'll come over here.

23                MS. GALVIN: Hi. I'm Elizabeth Curry Galvin.  
24    And I'm here to represent the American Veterinary Medical  
25    Association. And while this really is not my niche topic I

1     come sort of as the messenger. Our headquarters being so  
2     near we really felt we should have a representative here.

3             And it was the position of the AVMA that that  
4     statement would be achievable. There were a couple things  
5     that gave us pause. And that would be the parts that deal  
6     with the seamless food safety system and the farm to table  
7     preventive strategies.

8             I see that maybe those will be incorporated more  
9     in question 2 when we speak to barriers and gaps. But as an  
10    overall goal we felt it was achievable.

11            MS. WILCOX: Okay.

12            Go to the mike, please.

13            MR. WOOD: I'm Richard Wood with FACT, Food  
14    Animal Concerns Trust. And we've worked on this issue  
15    starting with the President's Food Safety Initiative last  
16    year.

17            And I'm not quite sure if my remarks are  
18    appropriate here or in the next question. But as we look at  
19    this Vision Statement there are three things that really  
20    jump out at us, as we work on food safety issues, primarily  
21    with the USDA and the FDA.

22            The first is the farm to table question, which  
23    was raised earlier and whether or not it's achievable. We  
24    would hope it would be achievable. And we appreciate the  
25    language that has been used by the USDA and the federal

1 government to talk about a food safety system that indeed  
2 begins on the farm and moves to the table.

3 As has been mentioned so often, our strategies  
4 have focused more on the table and not so much on the farm.  
5 Unfortunately, what we have seen to date is a food safety  
6 strategy that starts with the plant, whether it be  
7 processing or slaughterhouse and moves to the plate. We  
8 want not a plant to plate strategy, but we want a farm to  
9 table strategy.

10 Some significant steps need to be taken then in  
11 that regard. We currently have a HACCP plan that we  
12 supported and worked very hard on that moves from processing  
13 plant and through that process to moving outside the plant.

14 We've seen a major education strategy focusing on  
15 fight back, which focuses on the table. We've yet to see  
16 any major strategy focusing on the farm.

17 Part of that, we're told, is -- has to do with  
18 regulatory authority. Part of that has to do, we're told,  
19 with the lack of research and knowledge, in terms of how the  
20 pathogens express themselves on a farm.

21 We have our project. We have a Nest Egg Project  
22 that's been working on researching the presence of  
23 Salmonella enteritidis on farms since 1991. We'd be glad to  
24 share that research with you.

25 There have been several now risk assessments that

1 have focused on on-farm pathogens, one being the Salmonella  
2 enteritidis risk assessment, which we're still not sure  
3 where it's going to come out. We hope it has a focus on the  
4 farm.

5 There's a most recent one, where some of us were  
6 at a meeting with the USDA a couple of weeks ago focusing on  
7 E. coli 015778 in ground beef. And we're hoping that that  
8 risk assessment might bring increased attention to the farm.  
9 But we haven't seen it yet. And this Vision Statement is  
10 achievable insomuch as it only moves from farm to table in  
11 our minds.

12 Secondly, we are concerned about risk assessments  
13 and their role in this whole process. We're a firm believer  
14 of a science-based food safety system. We sometimes see,  
15 though, risk assessments being a delaying force when it  
16 could be a motivating force. Or we see risk assessments  
17 sometimes taking up to two years to cause a particular rule  
18 or movement to take shape and move forward.

19 We think risk assessments are appropriate, but  
20 also need to have an appropriate role in the farm to table  
21 food safety strategy. And when they are a system of delay  
22 they should be set aside so that the percentages of lives  
23 that the risk assessment is determining whether or not will  
24 be saved, will be saved immediately, now rather than later.

25 Thirdly, we're concerned about the private -- the



1 public-private partnerships that are identified there. We  
2 recognize that given the size of our food safety system and  
3 the lack of resources by government regulatory authorities  
4 that we will only succeed in a farm to table system if there  
5 is a public-private partnership.

6 But that public-private partnership should not be  
7 an excuse to giving up regulatory authority on the part of  
8 the USDA, the FDA or the other regulatory authorities  
9 involved, whether it be a new food safety agency or  
10 whatever.

11 We've seen this giving up happen with the quality  
12 assurance programs, again as we look at the farms, where  
13 instead of moving to the farms, the regulatory authorities  
14 have said, Let the industry and the states if they may,  
15 develop their own quality assurance programs to address this  
16 on-farm concern, that being an expression of public-private  
17 partnerships.

18 When in fact, then, what has been created is a  
19 whole patchwork of quality assurance programs across the  
20 nation, all of them voluntary, few of them being consistent  
21 one with the other, very few of them requiring on-farm  
22 testing regarding pathogens; and so in our mind an  
23 inadequate expression of public-private partnerships.

24 We would hope that if this statement is to be  
25 real and to be achievable that the relationship of public

1 to private be one that was carefully looked at and closely  
2 examined.

3 And I hope that was an Amen.

4 MS. WILCOX: Okay. Thank you.

5 Sir?

6 MR. VARCHMIN: My name is Thomas Varchmin. I  
7 hope my voice lasts. I think I picked up the flu in a  
8 restaurant yesterday, ironically.

9 But anyway, I am Director of Environmental Health  
10 for Cook County, Illinois, in which county you sit right now  
11 if you're from out of state. We're probably the second -- I  
12 believe we're the second largest most populous county in the  
13 country at this time.

14 Some of my comments may reiterate those that were  
15 made by other people at the table specifically. And I do  
16 want to laud myself or, you know, applaud those consumers  
17 that came. I think that's really important.

18 Are you Ms. Connolly, by the way or Ms. Conley?

19 MS. DONETH: Doneth.

20 MR. VARCHMIN: Donnely.

21 MS. DONETH: Doneth.

22 MR. VARCHMIN: I believe I spoke to you on the  
23 phone. You have my sympathy about your son, by the way. I  
24 laud your efforts in food safety.

25 First of all, regarding the mission statement --

1 and I just had a cursory look at the outcomes. And I  
2 believe that education is going to be addressed as an  
3 outcome factor.

4 But I do believe that the -- and this may repeat  
5 some earlier statements that were made -- I do believe the  
6 statement could be beefed up, if you will -- no pun  
7 intended -- by expanding on a couple components of the  
8 mission statement.

9 And that is I do believe that the mission  
10 statement should contain something along the lines that food  
11 safety awareness begins at an early age and continues  
12 throughout life.

13 And I do believe that the administration, if it  
14 has not considered already, should consider requiring or  
15 looking at the requirement of food safety education as part  
16 of public school education, either at the elementary or high  
17 school level. I believe it's never too early to start  
18 educating consumers. And that continues throughout life.

19 I do believe the statement can also be made a  
20 little bit stronger if vulnerable populations are identified  
21 specifically. I would assume you're talking about the  
22 elderly, the young, the immuno-compromised.

23 And I believe if that's included in the mission  
24 statement that will more or less guaranty that those  
25 populations or elements of the population are not overlooked

1 in some of the strategic plans that you develop later on.

2 Earlier in my life, one of my past lives, I was  
3 regional manager for Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company  
4 for the midwest region. Worked out of the Chicago area  
5 here.

6 And one of the things that I became aware of in  
7 that short career -- they closed up after about three or  
8 four years of my regional manager, and I believe they're  
9 still in business in parts of this country -- but I became  
10 aware of the fact that many food items from farm to table,  
11 as we're calling it here today, are transported on maybe  
12 three or four different -- or more methods of  
13 transportation, including truck, rail -- that's two --  
14 airplane.

15 They're also staged at a half-dozen or more  
16 places, depending on where they're coming from. If they  
17 re coming from the west coast many of these food products  
18 are staged in public warehousing, which can be abysmal at  
19 best. I've seen some of it.

20 I believe that the entire transportation  
21 mechanism needs to be included in the farm to safety  
22 concept.

23 I understand that there are devices that are  
24 being looked at as being required, perhaps as part of a  
25 HACCP plan whereby food that has gone out of temperature can

1 be identified. I would strongly recommend that, you know,  
2 that be pursued and included.

3 And I believe that to assume that once food is  
4 put on the truck that it's going to be handled safely by the  
5 time it gets to the consumer, whether it be at the  
6 restaurant or retail food store, is probably naive at best.

7 In Chicago here we've had several exposes on  
8 television, which have demonstrated that some food items,  
9 including eggs for instance have sat on warehouse docks for  
10 a full day before they were loaded onto a truck.

11 There's no oversight at the warehouse level. I  
12 understand that, you know, resources are limited. But I  
13 think that having some kind of markers that I refer to would  
14 be one step in that direction.

15 Finally, I guess, the last thing I would have to  
16 say is that I believe that, you know, the mission statement,  
17 as it's outlined there, is a very good one. But I hope that  
18 it is flexible and that all the comments that are garnered  
19 here today and elsewhere throughout the country will be  
20 seriously considered and incorporated into your final  
21 mission statement.

22 Thank you.

23 MS. WILCOX: Thank you.

24 I'm thinking, you want to make one more comment,  
25 Nancy?

1                   We're going to close this part off unless there's  
2                   one or two other urgent comments.

3                   MS. DONELY: Thank you very much.

4                   It's Nancy Donely from Safe Tables Our Priority.  
5                   Just one comment on the very last sentence, Food is safe  
6                   because everyone understands and accepts their  
7                   responsibilities.

8                   I have been beaten up a number of times by both  
9                   government and industry because a statement such as that  
10                  makes it sound as if it's 100 percent guaranty. And we  
11                  consumers understand there is no such thing as 100 percent  
12                  guaranty.

13                  But that statement makes it sound like, You know  
14                  what, it is safe, which will cause people to relax actions  
15                  that will make it safe.

16                  Another thing that -- another word, I think -- so  
17                  I think there needs to be a qualifier in there of --  
18                  somehow, Is safer or, Can be as safe as possible when  
19                  everyone understands, accepts and implements their  
20                  responsibilities.

21                  MS. WILCOX: Thank you.

22                  Are there any other comments on this?

23                  Sir?

24                  MR. OLSON: I'm Ken Olson with American Farm  
25                  Bureau Federation. I think by and large the Vision

1 Statement is something that is achievable.

2 I guess I would focus on the second sentence  
3 within the statement. I think that lumps a lot of things  
4 together. And some of it relates to improving food safety.  
5 And some of it is maybe not as directly related.

6 I think that our farm to table preventive  
7 strategies are based on integrated research and application  
8 of appropriate technology throughout the system. And so I  
9 think that's where we improve the food safety.

10 I think the monitoring and surveillance are  
11 important parts of a system because they provide the  
12 information that we need to know if the system is working  
13 and allow us to address the next issue, which is new and  
14 emerging issues. So it is a part of the system. But it, by  
15 itself, does not improve food safety.

16 Looking at the enforcement aspect of it, the  
17 inspection and enforcement, again, that's part of a  
18 regulatory system. Of and by itself, it does not improve  
19 food safety. It is a penalty if our system does not work.

20 And so I think as far as improving safety, the  
21 important aspect is to function on the integrated research  
22 the application of technology and then, through the other  
23 parts we try to provide the assurance that the system is  
24 working, provide feedback throughout the system where there  
25 are shortcomings and address those.

1 MS. WILCOX: Thank you.

2 I'd like to now recognize a Laura Ticeitati -- I  
3 believe is her name -- who has come and apparently can only  
4 be here for a short period of time. She'd like to make a  
5 comment. And then we'll make a break.

6 MS. TICEIATI: Gosh, that's incredibly kind of  
7 you to let me do this. We've been on the road since five  
8 this morning. And the wind -- kind of an interesting  
9 experience.

10 MS. WILCOX: Please identify yourself.

11 MS. TICEIATI: I'm Laura Ticeitati from Mothers  
12 For Natural Law. We are the national coordinator for the  
13 Consumer Right To Know initiative for mandatory labeling of  
14 genetically engineered foods and one of the primary consumer  
15 clearinghouses for this issue for the United States for the  
16 American consumer.

17 I'm here on behalf of this coalition, which is a  
18 coalition of consumers, food industry members, clergy,  
19 government officials and scientists from all over the  
20 country who are concerned that the most substantive food  
21 safety issue facing Americans today seems to not really have  
22 a very big place in the President's Food Safety Council  
23 agenda.

24 In fact, in my meetings with some scientists at  
25 the White House the concern was more on emergency measures,



1 as opposed to long range vision, which I understand is the  
2 whole purpose of this meeting today, to discuss the long  
3 range vision.

4 So considering that there are serious warnings  
5 from the international scientific community and official  
6 outcry from countries all over the world about serious  
7 scientific and medical concerns about the safety of  
8 genetically altered organisms found in over 60 percent of  
9 the foods on our grocery shelves today, I feel that our  
10 nation's children are not being protected from a technology  
11 that is brand new and experimental and, in fact, has turned  
12 them into guinea pigs.

13 And I feel quite concerned about that. And I  
14 would like to see the council address this in the Vision  
15 Statement for a vision strategy for setting up a food safety  
16 position.

17 And to highlight some of these concerns what I'd  
18 like to do is just include some quotes from some of the  
19 members of this coalition, other scientists who could not be  
20 here today. And they asked me to speak out their quotes.

21 One of the scientists I'm speaking on behalf of  
22 Samuel Epstein, who is an M.D., Professor of Occupational  
23 and Environmental Medicine at the School of Public Health,  
24 University of Chicago and University of Illinois in Chicago.  
25

1           He's also the chairman of the Cancer Prevention  
2 Coalition and recipient of the 1998 Livelihood Award, which  
3 is better known as the alternative Nobel prize for his  
4 contribution to cancer prevention. And he's also a signee  
5 of the Consumer Right To Know initiative.

6           Dr. Epstein states that, "Levels of the hormone  
7 IGF-1 are increased in milk produced from dairy cows  
8 injected with the genetically engineered hormone RBGH," and  
9 that a wide range of converging evidence over the last  
10 decade, including several articles that he has published and  
11 written for peer-reviewed scientific journals -- they  
12 clearly incriminate that these high levels of IGH -- IGF-  
13 1 -- I'm sorry -- and Monsanto's RBGH milk is a serious risk  
14 factor for breast, colon, prostate and other cancers.

15           And he concludes that the very milk we encourage  
16 our children to drink might be seriously harming a  
17 generation with no benefit to anyone except perhaps  
18 financial profits for those who make it.

19           Dr. Suzanne Wuerthele is a Ph.D. and board-  
20 certified toxicologist. She is also called in on a regular  
21 basis as a national expert in risk assessment. She is a  
22 scientific advisor to Mothers For Natural Law.

23           She states, regarding genetically engineered  
24 foods that, "The risks of this new technology have not been  
25 fully ascertained because there are still no scientifically

1 peer-reviewed methodologies to assess the health and  
2 environmental risks of exchanging genes among living  
3 organisms."

4 "Therefore," she asks, "what is the basis upon  
5 which these organisms have been determined to be safe and  
6 how can the public be assured that each and every one of  
7 these genetically engineered foods have been adequately  
8 reviewed."

9 The third scientist that I will quote today is  
10 Dr. Marian Nestle. Dr. Nestle is a Ph.D MPH, a Professor  
11 and Chairman of the Department of Nutrition and Food Studies  
12 at New York University.

13 And before I get to her quote I just want to give  
14 a background to this, is that the issue of concern here is  
15 the issue of food allergies. Three to five million  
16 Americans suffer from food allergies.

17 Regarding the need for labeling of genetically  
18 engineered foods to protect those with allergies, it seems  
19 that although current regulations withhold approval of  
20 genetically engineered foods that use genes from foods which  
21 are known allergens, considering that the substances that  
22 are being used in genetic engineering are substances that  
23 have never been in the human food supply before, these are  
24 not being adequately tested. And these are not required to  
25 be labeled. They are unknown allergens or they may be

1 unknown allergens.

2 And Dr. Nestle wrote in an editorial for the New  
3 England Journal of Medicine entitled, Allergies In  
4 Transgenic Foods Questions of Policy, "It is in everyone's  
5 best interest to develop regulatory policies for transgenic  
6 foods that include pre-market notification and labeling.

7 "Industry benefits when the public is convinced  
8 that transgenic foods are safe. And stronger federal  
9 regulation would encourage public confidence."

10 I think that what I feel is that having met with  
11 some of the congress people who were responsible for helping  
12 initiate the founding of this Food Safety Council, it -- I  
13 know that this council was started from a sincere desire to  
14 avert the kinds of tragedies that too many American families  
15 have suffered in recent years from surprising and unexpected  
16 outbreaks of food toxicity.

17 Genetically engineered foods represent a  
18 significant patentable change in the nature of our food.  
19 They are new. They are experimental. And they will, like  
20 any product of a young technology, cause side effects. What  
21 these side effects will be remain to be seen.

22 My feeling is that wouldn't it be better for once  
23 if we could move out of that crisis management, emergency  
24 mode into a style of functioning with the foresight to plan  
25 ahead for such possibilities.

1           There is a huge and heated international debate  
2   raging about these foods. Right now our children are caught  
3   in the middle of it.

4           My hope is that the original principles upon  
5   which this council was formed will guide its actions with  
6   respect to this new technology.

7           Therefore, I ask the council to open the public  
8   debate on genetically engineered foods, create an  
9   independent scientific review board comprised of scientists  
10   who have nothing to gain from the marketing of these  
11   products, to establish proper safety protocols for the  
12   unfoldment of this technology into our society.

13          And while these experts are busy figuring out how  
14   to assess the risks of genetically engineered foods, I ask  
15   that the government label them so that the American people  
16   can decide for themselves whether they want to take the  
17   chance and eat them or not and so that parents, mothers, can  
18   make informed choices about the foods they feed to their  
19   children.

20          And I just feel that that probably isn't too much  
21   to ask. And I thank you very much for giving me the  
22   opportunity to express that.

23          MS. WILCOX: Thank you for your comments.

24          We're going to now take a ten-minute break. We  
25   have two more questions to get done before lunch. And we'll

1 look forward to having everybody back in -- think about five  
2 minutes before eleven.

3 (Whereupon, a short recess was taken.)

4 MS. DONETH: Come back to your seats, please. We  
5 will get started on our second and third questions of the  
6 day. And again, I think we still have a couple seats at the  
7 table. So let me renew my invitation for folks not to be  
8 bashful, but to join us at the table.

9 We have gotten off to a lively and a thoughtful  
10 start. And let me just say on behalf of my colleagues that  
11 we thank you very much. It really is gratifying to see the  
12 effort and the thoughtfulness that people are putting into  
13 this exercise.

14 As Caren said, what we are trying to do with  
15 these questions is to basically facilitate a discussion of  
16 our Vision Statement, work through the Vision Statement by  
17 way of these questions.

18 And Questions 2 and 3 really are sort of the same  
19 coin, but the opposite sides: What are the barriers to  
20 pursuing this vision? And to make this vision a reality  
21 what changes are needed?

22 Some of the comments that were made in response  
23 to the first question touched on this. Obviously, people  
24 had given thought to gaps in the system, barriers,  
25 difficulties; and also the changes that they would like to

1 see.

2 So if I could have some more lively interest as  
3 we had with the first question.

4 Please.

5 MS. GALVIN: Hi. Again on behalf of the American  
6 Veterinary Medical Association, we saw a barrier as the  
7 existing fragmented food safety system. And we thought that  
8 the mission statement there was a noble goal. But  
9 the statement about seamless food safety system would be  
10 very difficult, if not impossible if either we did not  
11 combine the federal food safety responsibilities into one  
12 food safety agency or at the least, assigning control of the  
13 food safety budget to one person.

14 Along the lines of gaps, we felt the farm to  
15 table preventive strategy really is a gap, when we look at  
16 the farm level.

17 We wanted to reiterate that while we think it's  
18 important to find interventions at the farm, we are at our  
19 infancy in actually identifying some of these interventions.  
20 And we're a long way from implementing on-farm strategies  
21 that would predictably and reliably reduce the zoonotic  
22 pathogens.

23 So in -- to tie that to Question 3 then, What  
24 changes would you do, we're looking for research. We feel  
25 that a commitment of resources, both from time, money, as

1 well as personnel for both basic and applied research is  
2 needed so that we can get to the point of having effective  
3 on-farm strategies.

4 MR. O'HARA: Thank you.

5 Sir?

6 MR. SAMUELS: My name is Jack Samuels. I'm  
7 President of the Truth In Labeling campaign and a consumer.  
8 I want my remarks today to be positive, but I also want you  
9 to understand that I address you from a position of extreme  
10 frustration and anger.

11 Just this past week my life was threatened  
12 because I ate a baked potato. And I'm in a position where I  
13 now am at risk of dying each and every time I buy a  
14 vegetable in this country. And I want to talk about that.

15 Having said that, let me answer the question,  
16 What are the barriers to pursuing this vision. It's with  
17 great pain that I say that the barrier are the three  
18 agencies represented at the table, the FDA, the USDA and the  
19 EPA, in part. I don't give you all the credit for this.

20 But let me say I keep hearing about pathogens and  
21 I keep hearing about sound science. And I don't mean to  
22 minimize those particular things. You know, pathogens are  
23 truly a concern. No one should have to lose a child, as  
24 this young lady to my right has.

25 But the situation is that in our society each and



1 every year we're having more learning disabilities, we're  
2 having more children with grotesque obesity with quote not  
3 knowing why. We're having more cancers. And with each year  
4 we're adding more and more chemicals and additives to our  
5 food.

6 And the problem is that your agencies are doing  
7 that based on quote sound science. What we don't mention is  
8 that because of budget restraints that sound science is  
9 being submitted by the very industries that wish to sell  
10 those chemicals.

11 And many of those studies are flawed. And, in  
12 fact, when the agencies are in some cases given studies that  
13 refute what the industry has submitted those studies are  
14 tossed aside.

15 And the problem is that you approve a chemical  
16 today and it may in your mind even seem to be very valid.  
17 But when it creates a problem no one can possibly look at  
18 cause and effect.

19 How can you determine 20 years from now that the  
20 fact that you're spraying glutamic acid on crops has caused  
21 an increase in things like learning disabilities and an  
22 effect on wildlife?

23 Now, I made the statement -- and again, I know  
24 that this is politically incorrect for me to say it -- but I  
25 made the statement that the very agencies that sit at the

1 table are part of the problem.

2 I mean, we don't need to re-cook this. We have  
3 to get the existing agencies to do the job that they were,  
4 in fact, given. And that job is to protect the health of  
5 consumers.

6 Now, my particular area of special knowledge is  
7 the subject of monosodium glutamate. And when I say  
8 monosodium glutamate, I am speaking of processed free  
9 glutamic acid which indeed, is what people with MSG  
10 sensitivity react to.

11 Currently it exists in over 40 label descriptors.  
12 You know, the ingredient monosodium glutamate must say  
13 monosodium glutamate. But there are more than 40 other  
14 ingredients that contain processed free glutamic acid and  
15 will give the same reaction. And the consumer has no wild  
16 idea that it exists or why they're getting sick.

17 Now, sound science indicates that over 25 percent  
18 of the population react. Mr. Levitt's FDA will tell you  
19 it's 2 percent. I will discuss that 2 percent study with  
20 you and show you that 43 percent of the subjects in that  
21 study, in fact, had what we now recognize to be MSG  
22 reactions. It was a very cleverly written industry-funded  
23 study.

24 But more important, let me say that there has  
25 been an attempt to have MSG disclosed in food. As early as

1 1989 a commissioner of the FDA stated to me that they would  
2 be working on a regulation.

3 It has been published throughout the '90s that  
4 they're working on a regulation. The FDA several -- two,  
5 three years ago in court said they're working on a  
6 regulation. There is no regulation.

7 And when, in fact, they're going to come up with  
8 a regulation the FDA is telling everyone, including members  
9 of Congress that no one will react to less than 3 grams of  
10 MSG. And they quote a FDA funded study. That study also  
11 says that the lowest level to elicit a response is not know.  
12 So that is, in fact, a lie. So there is one example of the  
13 FDA.

14 The USDA -- so that we share things here --  
15 Section 403 of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act  
16 states that it's deceptive and misleading to, you know,  
17 state that a product doesn't have something when, indeed, it  
18 does.

19 The FDA has finally, in fact, determined that to  
20 say, No added MSG on a product, when indeed, it has  
21 processed free -- well, they say when it has free glutamic  
22 acid is deceptive and misleading.

23 The USDA is approving as we sit here today labels  
24 that say, No added MSG when indeed, there is MSG in the  
25 product.

1           When we approached the USDA they said, Well, if  
2     the FDA agrees with you well then we'll stop. And so we  
3     demonstrated that the FDA, in fact, has seen to it that  
4     certain labels of this type had been changed. And at that  
5     point the USDA told us, Well, that's the FDA, this is our  
6     decision. We're going to continue to do it.

7           So there are products on the shelf today that  
8     people are getting sick from that say, No added MSG when  
9     indeed, they have MSG in the product. And the USDA is  
10    supporting that.

11          Now we turn to the EPA, who ridiculously has  
12    removed any tolerance of glutamic acid on all raw  
13    agricultural commodities providing that the glutamic acid is  
14    used as a growth enhancer and good farming practices are  
15    employed.

16          That particular -- having done that, they also  
17    registered a product to allow processed free glutamic acid  
18    to be spread on crops.

19          When we learned of that I submitted over 500  
20    sound scientific references, most with abstracts, to counter  
21    the 14 1979 and before studies that the EPA relied on and  
22    the nonsense on metabolism, which has nothing to do with  
23    reaction supplied by the company. I was told that my  
24    studies were meaningless.

25          I might mention to you that 83 of those studies

1     were on learning disabilities.   Seventy-three of them were  
2     on grotesque obesity.

3             The claim against those studies is that they were  
4     animal studies.   Since when in this country do we do  
5     experimentation on humans for brain lesions?   Because that's  
6     what we're talking about.   And in fact, in the 500 studies I  
7     sent there were human studies and there were micro-units of  
8     administration.

9             As we sit here the EPA is sending letters out to  
10    people, a form letter out to people who have complained  
11    about this spray.   And it can best be described as a lie.  
12    It makes the Department look stupid.   Because it has no  
13    point in fact.

14            The fact of the matter is that, although I don't  
15    speak to the entire nation, I can produce four people who  
16    have had typical MSG reactions from eating a baked potato.  
17    And I think that's pretty sad.   And I no longer can protect  
18    myself because I think I should be eating vegetables.   I  
19    think I should be allowed to eat vegetables.

20            There is no question that glutamic acid in neuro-  
21    science has been shown to be dangerous for infants, for  
22    young children.   It's dangerous for all of us, but  
23    particularly for young children.   There is absolutely no  
24    question.

25            So now we're going to spray it on crops.   And 20

1 years from now we're going to have problems not only with  
2 our children, but in wildlife. But he agency knows better  
3 because they made a mistake and they, like the FDA, are  
4 going to spend the rest of their existence defending a  
5 position that has long since passed and long since refuted  
6 by sound science.

7               So I think that if the President wishes to do  
8 something and the President's Council wishes to do something  
9 that the first thing should be done is to see that the  
10 agencies, in fact, get their act together and take their  
11 jobs seriously and start to protect the consumer.

12              It is sad that a consumer can provide data to an  
13 agency and it is so to speak, thrown in the garbage pail  
14 when industry has the options to answer those statements  
15 and, in fact, provide their purchased science and decisions  
16 are made on that basis.

17              Now, I want to tell you that I'm sympathetic to  
18 the agencies because I think that if your council does  
19 anything, it maybe would be along the unpopular direction to  
20 take politics out of food, number one; and number two, to  
21 take some of the money that we're saving on defense and  
22 other things and perhaps put some money into the bank for  
23 undirected research on some of these chemicals that we are  
24 using.

25              We spend money doing research when we approve a

1 drug. And we just so to speak, take a wave when there is an  
2 application for a chemical in food that in many cases is far  
3 more dangerous than the drugs that are on the market.

4 MR. O'HARA: Thank you, sir.

5 Ms. Doneth, you had a comment?

6 MS. DONETH: Yes. Thank you. Sue Doneth again  
7 with Safe Tables Our Priority. I have a couple of comments  
8 to make regarding gaps in the system.

9 One thing that became abundantly clear to me when  
10 I had -- my first child became ill with hepatitis-A was the  
11 fragmented system in place in overseeing the safety of the  
12 food supply.

13 The number of agencies that are involved and the  
14 differences or the inconsistency in overseeing the same  
15 product.

16 I mean, if we're looking at providing consumers  
17 with a safe food supply I don't think that the system should  
18 be different for USDA and FDA, for instance, just because of  
19 the type of product that the agency is overseeing.

20 There are similar risks involved with the same  
21 types of foods. But there are very different approaches  
22 when it comes to addressing those concerns, particularly  
23 when you're talking about, you know, HACCP implementation  
24 and inspections.

25 I find it incredible that, you know, there's a

1 meat inspector present in plants at all times, but a produce  
2 plant may be inspected once every ten years. Statistics and  
3 food-borne illness increases have shown that produce is  
4 posing very high risks for the same types of infections --  
5 or pathogens that have historically been associated strictly  
6 with meat and poultry.

7 So I think as we're seeing food pathogens coming  
8 up in virtually every type of food we need to have more  
9 consistency. And we're just too fragmented. There's too  
10 many agencies. There's too many different -- nobody's on  
11 first, so to speak.

12 I think we need a centralized regulatory agency  
13 that's overseeing things the same way. And I think that  
14 trickles down also to the state and local level.

15 When you're talking about state regulations and  
16 state and local health departments there's a vast -- there's  
17 a great diversity in how public health departments handle  
18 food-borne illness outbreaks, what illnesses are reportable  
19 and so on.

20 Thank you.

21 MR. O'HARA: Thank you.

22 Do we have any comments from this side of the  
23 room to our gaps/barriers question, changes that we need?  
24 Let's start at the end of the table and work our way up.

25 MS. BUSSARD: Connie Bussard with the Illinois



1 Council of Food and Agricultural Research. I'm also a  
2 registered dietician. And I work as a corporate consultant  
3 for a wholesale food distributor.

4 And talking about gaps, as I looked at this the  
5 other day, one of the things that would be immensely helpful  
6 is to extend the food labeling law to foods that are sold  
7 in -- that are not -- that are sold not for retail use.

8 For instance, all the institutional foods that  
9 are sitting back out here really don't need to be labeled,  
10 as to product that's in them or -- they do, but they don't  
11 have to have the nutritional analysis and they don't have to  
12 have all the foods on it -- or the ingredients.

13 I'm often called and asked to provide nutritional  
14 information and ingredient information, specifically having  
15 to do with any kind of soy isolate or monosodium glutamate  
16 or any of these. And many times they can be lumped under a  
17 name called, Secret Ingredients or our -- you know -- which  
18 is what they do.

19 I mean, if you've got a spice based product that  
20 you have a unique flavor for, are you as a company going to  
21 give this away to somebody else by telling them what you've  
22 got in it? No.

23 But I think in deference to the man who was just  
24 speaking and some of these things, as I looked at this, this  
25 is one of the places where we could do something that's

1       very -- that we really need to have done.

2                       And that's that we need to have full disclosure  
3       as to ingredients and nutritional analysis on all of the  
4       foods that hit our food system.

5                       Thank you.

6                       MR. O'HARA:   Thank you.

7                       Ma'am?

8                       MS. ROBERTS:   I'm Sue Roberts.   As I looked at  
9       what I saw as the barriers, I came up with four.   And the  
10      first one was inconsistent and outdated statutory mandates,  
11      which sometimes limit implementation of scientific  
12      principles that we know are out there.   Because the laws are  
13      too old to do that.

14                      And an example might be lack of jurisdiction to  
15      evaluate food handling practices in countries of origin for  
16      imported foods.

17                      I think it's incredible how we look at imported  
18      foods.   And I kind of personally -- you know, if there is a  
19      country where I would be fearful of drinking the water, I  
20      don't really want to have that food coming in and having it  
21      not looked at by our government.   And from what I'm reading,  
22      it looks like that's a pretty big problem that we have right  
23      now.

24                      The second major barrier is the one that was  
25      already spoken to by Sue.   And that's multiple agencies with

1     varying food safety systems, which cause all kinds of  
2     problems, from different implementation of the HACCP, which  
3     are -- you know, should be implemented all over. But  
4     they're done differently by FDA versus USDA.

5             Food processing plant inspections that are  
6     inconsistent with some getting many and others getting none,  
7     as Sue said. And that with the ability of things to fall  
8     through the cracks all the time. And we're seeing that in  
9     our system.

10            So we need to address that barrier of multiple  
11     agencies that aren't working together as much as they  
12     should.

13            Third barrier is the inconsistent inspections,  
14     which other people have addressed, with regard to food  
15     service industry.

16            And I was recently at a seminar where someone  
17     talked about -- you know, as people are eating less and less  
18     from home and -- all right, from home -- and eating more  
19     out, that has to become a better priority and more money has  
20     to be allocated to those kinds of inspections in the food  
21     service industry.

22            And I heard a statistic that I found incredible.  
23     Because also as the food service industries get larger and  
24     people are eating at the same place, there's one fast food  
25     chain in the United States, which according to a Wall Street

1 article, 7 percent of our population eats at that chain  
2 every day. That is incredible risk, to the extent that it  
3 increases our risk.

4 And so the -- that chain probably does really  
5 well with HACCP practices. I don't know. But I think that  
6 we have to really be looking at the food service  
7 implementation.

8 Then the fourth barrier that I see is that  
9 there's no single voice representing food safety issues.  
10 And I'm a supporter of having a single voice and actually, a  
11 single department. And I also understand that that probably  
12 is going to cause problems at HHS and USDA and EPA and all  
13 of those.

14 But this is a serious enough issue, has to be  
15 taken care of. And one of the largest barriers, there's no  
16 single voice out there representing all of us as the  
17 consumers.

18 MR. O'HARA: Thank you, very much.

19 Sir?

20 MR. WOOD: It's easier to sit than stand. When I  
21 stand, I preach. When I sit, maybe I'll talk. But who  
22 knows?

23 MS. WILCOX: We'll judge you.

24 MR. WOOD: Okay. I'm Richard Wood. I'm with  
25 FACT, Food Animal Concerns Trust. We're based in Chicago.

1 We work to improve our food safety system and particularly  
2 focusing on farm management systems, regarding meat, milk  
3 and eggs particularly.

4 My comments are focused, I guess, on the  
5 barriers, but more importantly on to make the vision a  
6 reality, what changes are needed. And I'd like to pick up  
7 where the prior speaker left off.

8 We called for a single food safety agency that  
9 has a single mission focused on food safety, clear roles and  
10 responsibilities, regulatory authority joined with  
11 enforcement powers and a farm to table regulatory  
12 responsibilities.

13 FACT wants a food safety system with one agency  
14 where the singular purpose is to regulate food production  
15 and promote food safety.

16 In the current system the regulatory agencies  
17 often have dual purposes that may stand in opposition to  
18 each other, diminishing the agencies' effectiveness in  
19 addressing food safety.

20 For example, the USDA, as we all know, addresses  
21 food safety under the double mandate of both regulating  
22 portions of the food safety industry -- or the food industry  
23 and promoting its products. When you put those two purposes  
24 together the outcome may not always favor food safety as the  
25 bottom line.

1           In another agency part of the purpose for the  
2     FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine is the consideration  
3     and approval of animal drugs for their uses. And yet the  
4     Animal Drug Availability Act increased the role of industry  
5     in the FDA's new animal drug decision making process.

6           In effect, the FDA is now called upon to respond  
7     to the interests of food safety and the animal drug  
8     industry. And there are two -- there are points where these  
9     two interest become mutually exclusive.

10          Secondly, FACT wants a food safety system where  
11     it is clear who is responsible for regulating food  
12     production. Today federal agencies share responsibilities  
13     for food animal products at several points in a way that is  
14     often confusing to producers and consumers, if not the  
15     regulators themselves.

16          For example, while the USDA has the authority to  
17     grade eggs, the FDA is the agency required to perform trace  
18     backs of food-borne illness outbreaks. No single agency is  
19     responsible for the safety of shell eggs.

20          With regard to safeguarding U.S. cattle from  
21     bovine spongiform encephalopathy, the FDA has implemented a  
22     ban on mammalian feed for ruminants, but the USDA is  
23     monitoring herd health. Again, no single agency is  
24     responsible.

25          Third, we want regulatory authority joined with

1 enforcement powers. The effectiveness of our current food  
2 safety system is diminished because the very agencies that  
3 are to regulate the chemical, physical and biological  
4 hazards in our foods have few powers to act on behalf of the  
5 health of the consumers when such contaminants are found.

6 The FDA can conduct trace back investigations  
7 where a food-borne illness outbreak has occurred, but the  
8 FDA in itself does not have the authority to force the  
9 company to recall the product that caused the outbreak.  
10 They have to go to Justice.

11 The FDA has the authority to approve new animal  
12 drugs, but it does not have the authority to press charges  
13 when there has been a food animal drug violation.

14 In our office right now we're studying the  
15 statutes to figure out what authority the FDA has to remove  
16 sub-therapeutic drugs that may impact humans. And that  
17 authority is very convoluted and next to impossible to be  
18 implemented.

19 The USDA can adopt regulations that require  
20 companies to comply with HACCP, but the USDA cannot force a  
21 company to recall contaminated or adulterated products even  
22 if they occur as a result of HACCP violations.

23 An agency decision to withdraw inspections may  
24 stop the plant from marketing more products, but it does  
25 nothing to address the public health risk coming from the

1 product in question.

2 FACT wants a food safety system where the agency  
3 that is responsible for regulation also has the authority in  
4 itself to force compliance without having to resort to court  
5 action.

6 Finally, as I stated earlier, FACT wants a food  
7 safety system where the authority of the agency begins where  
8 food production begins, on the farm. We want a system that  
9 is led by one agency with one purpose, having clear roles  
10 and responsibilities that can enforce what it regulates and  
11 that starts where food starts, on the farm.

12 Thanks.

13 MR. O'HARA: Thank you very much, sir.

14 If we can start in the back and work our way to  
15 the table.

16 MR. VARCHMIN: Hi again. Thomas Varchmin,  
17 Director of Environmental Health for Cook County Health  
18 Department.

19 An example of a gap that exists is one here right  
20 in Cook County, which I'd like to just take a few seconds to  
21 explain.

22 Our department, the Cook County Department of  
23 Public Health, when it was established more than 50 years  
24 ago it was given authority only for unincorporated Cook  
25 County, which, of course, at that time was a large part of



1 Cook County. And obviously, it's diminished over the years.

2

3 And we now have facing us, if you will, more than  
4 120 local health departments. There's very little  
5 unincorporated Cook County that's left. Perhaps, you know,  
6 a few hundred acres of unincorporated Cook County.

7 In order to address that gap, what we've done  
8 locally, our department has had a program in effect now for  
9 more than ten years. And we worked with Dr. Okeno from the  
10 State Health Department and his staff in setting up this  
11 program a long time ago under a small grant, which has since  
12 come and gone. But we're still going ahead with it.

13 It's a voluntary program, whereby other health  
14 departments, these small -- for instance, the Village of  
15 Schaumburg here has their own health department, a fine one  
16 I might say with a rather large staff.

17 We have a program whereby any of these villages  
18 can voluntarily request that our department come in and  
19 review their food program. And that includes all of their  
20 records.

21 We look for consistency in inspections. We look  
22 for completeness of records. We look for accuracy of  
23 records, the fact that records are maintained in an orderly  
24 manner.

25 And the additional component of that program is

1     that we also take out at least one, probably the most senior  
2     health officer on staff -- we take that health officer out  
3     in the field and we conduct at least 15 inspections.

4             First five are joint inspections, whereby we more  
5     or less make sure we're seeing things the same way. By  
6     things, I mean violations in the restaurant itself, while  
7     the restaurant's operating.

8             We then take that health officer out and we do  
9     ten more inspections representing retail food stores and  
10    restaurants. And there's a required level of proficiency  
11    that needs to be shown in order to be successful in that  
12    exercise.

13            If they are successful we recognize the program  
14    with a plaque. And we also recognize that health officer  
15    for his proficiency with a plaque. And we renew that  
16    certification every five years.

17            We've had the program in effect for more than ten  
18    years. So far only four villages have stepped forward to  
19    have their programs looked into. And I think you can  
20    understand why. You know, there's a real fear, if you will,  
21    of somebody coming in and looking into -- you know, into  
22    your records. Maybe you're -- you know, you're afraid for  
23    your job. But that's the real world, you know, at this  
24    level.

25            One of the villages that -- it was a two-year

1 process -- the town of Cicero, actually. They finally did  
2 get certification, but they worked very hard to get it.

3 So at this level we do have a mechanism in effect  
4 to sort of address the one gap here in Illinois. There are  
5 five recognized health agencies. By recognized, mean Dr.  
6 Okeno's department, the Illinois Department of Public  
7 Health.

8 In order for us to get any kind of funding from  
9 the State Health Department and to retain that funding we  
10 have to meet certain -- very strict program standards in at  
11 least four programs, one of which is the food protection or  
12 food safety program.

13 They come in and look at our records. They  
14 standardize our staff. And then we trickle that down into  
15 the locals. And that's how that program works. They do a  
16 very thorough program review.

17 And most of our staff, if not all, in the next  
18 year or two will be totally licensed by the State of  
19 Illinois, just as doctors and nurses are, as licensed  
20 environmental health practitioners. It's a very rigid exam.  
21 And you have to know what you're doing when you take the  
22 exam. And you have to have at least two years of experience  
23 before you can even sit for it.

24 The second component of that program, which we're  
25 hoping will address the -- this gap, if you will, in Cook

1 County here is that we actually -- if they don't want to  
2 have us take a look at their programs, if they don't want to  
3 have their officers standardized, we have over 30  
4 communities now -- I think it's approaching 33 now -- 33  
5 villages or towns which have stepped forward and taken  
6 advantage of what we call our contract program.

7           These villages have chosen to have us step in and  
8 become their health officers for them in the food program.  
9 We're doing that. Like I say, I think thirty-third village  
10 will be signing up this year. We do all their food  
11 inspections, whether it be in the restaurants or retail food  
12 stores.

13           And our health officers are very well trained.  
14 They're standardized. And they see things the same way. So  
15 it brings some kind of continuity hopefully to consumers in  
16 Cook County that at least in these villages or towns where  
17 we review their programs and standardize their health  
18 officers or where we have looked at their program itself and  
19 where we have a contract with them, there's some kind of  
20 consistency, if you will, in food safety throughout Cook  
21 County, whether it be from the north end all the way to the  
22 south end.

23           Again, there's 120 towns out there. And we've  
24 got 30 under contract. Only three programs have been  
25 reviewed. So that leaves an awful lot out there.

1           Just for your own information, here in Cook  
2   County many years ago certified or recognized health  
3   departments were set up differently back in the '50s than  
4   they are now. The City of Evanston, the Village of Oak  
5   Park, Stickney Township and the City of Chicago and our  
6   department. There's five quote unquote certified and  
7   recognized health departments.

8           That's been changed. The only way to get  
9   recognized now is to be a county health department or a  
10   multi-county health department here in Illinois.

11          However, these villages did get their  
12   certification years ago. And, you know, it's not about to  
13   disappear whether -- unless they do that willingly.

14          My second comment or comments would be sort of, I  
15   guess, war stories in a way. Just to represent to you how  
16   simplistic sometimes things can be presented to the public  
17   or to the press.

18          A few years ago when HACCP was announced and  
19   being implemented, I believe probably -- or being talked  
20   about being implemented in at least the meat plants and I  
21   think fish plants were to follow shortly thereafter, an  
22   editorial appeared in the Chicago Tribune written by the  
23   Tribune staff. It was written by somebody like myself or  
24   you that wrote in. This was the Tribune, under their  
25   editorial byline.

1                   And they said, HACCP is here, all of our fears  
2                   are gone. This is the answer to food safety in this  
3                   country. And they closed -- and I have -- I still have the  
4                   editorial, I have it framed as a matter of fact -- they  
5                   said, okay, Let's immediately fire the 10,000 federal  
6                   employees that are inspecting these plants, okay. Get rid  
7                   of them. You know, kill all the attorneys. Right?

8                   It doesn't work that way. You know, a plan is  
9                   not -- a plan by itself is not a solution. You still need  
10                  the players. You still need the soldiers, of which, you  
11                  know, at the federal level there's not enough players. You  
12                  know, and I support them, I support the state, I support us  
13                  locally. I wish I had more players out in the field.  
14                  That's the fact of it.

15                 And human nature being what it is, if you're not  
16                 there to check on people and do random inspections, people  
17                 are going to in plain English cheat, you know. And a plan  
18                 is only as good as its enforcement or those that as that  
19                 plan says, food is safe because everyone understands and  
20                 accepts their responsibilities.

21                 It might read better if it said, The food supply  
22                 will be safer when everyone understands and accepts their  
23                 responsibilities. We're not at that point yet.

24                 Second thing, another editorial, a sister of  
25                 agency of ours, the Dupage County Health Department, about

1 five or -- well, it goes back almost ten years now.

2 The Dupage County Health Department tried to  
3 enforce regulations for pot luck dinners, which can be a  
4 real source of, you know, food-borne illness. Pot luck  
5 dinners, church bingos, that type of thing, where everybody  
6 chips in and brings food from home or helps work in the  
7 kitchen.

8 And when they did that, I don't think it was the  
9 Tribune, it might have been the Times, the Sun Times. But I  
10 won't blame either one at this point.

11 Again, their editorial page ran an editorial  
12 saying that, you know, communism -- literally, communism has  
13 come to Dupage County, you know. The Health Department is  
14 now going to crack down on pot luck dinners. You know,  
15 what's next? You know, America -- you know, the pie, apple  
16 pie, the American flag. And I saved that one, too.

17 So again, from a regulator's point of view or,  
18 you know, from your own point of view as consumers or  
19 victims of food-borne illness, those are some of the  
20 realities of it.

21 And this week if you turn on Channel 2 tonight,  
22 if you're still in town, they're running an expose on  
23 restaurants in the City of Chicago, which has almost 25,000  
24 food establishments, you know, retail food stores,  
25 warehouses, restaurants, what have you. And they have a

1 very small staff like many of us do.

2 And it's not always easy to be in these  
3 restaurants at all. Some people really believe -- I get  
4 phone calls at the office. They go, When was the last time  
5 you were in the restaurant. Well we inspect restaurants  
6 four times a year. And we do it randomly. You know,  
7 they're unannounced inspections.

8 You mean you're not in there all the time?  
9 People really believe that you're in these restaurants  
10 watching somebody cook all the time. Well, that  
11 responsibility lies with the chef, if you will, the manager.

12  
13 And here in Illinois we have another program that  
14 again, that the state runs. It requires that at least one  
15 individual in any food establishment -- we're talking food  
16 service here, like restaurants, delis -- at least one person  
17 has to be certified in food service sanitation management

18 And again, it involves taking an exam and passing  
19 the exam. It's offered in several languages. What I have  
20 found is many times people will -- somebody in the  
21 restaurant will take the exam, pass it and it might be the  
22 person that works the cash register. It's not actually the  
23 person that's in the kitchen that's involved in the process  
24 of preparing the food.

25 Illinois has tried to -- I don't know if they've



1     been successful yet, it might be pending. They've been  
2     trying to get at least one person, you know, on the premises  
3     at all times when potentially hazardous food is being  
4     prepared or handled, you know, in any way. And, you know,  
5     there's some people that are against that, I would imagine  
6     some industry associations, if you will.

7             But, you know, it's a good idea. But again, the  
8     certification is only as good as the person that's taking  
9     the course and only as good as what he brings back to his  
10    food establishment.

11            And there's a mentality out there, just so you  
12    know, at the retail food store level, or retail restaurant  
13    level, not throughout the industry -- and we do have a  
14    representative of the National Restaurant Association here,  
15    by the way -- but there is a small element of operators that  
16    feel that they have a revolving door business.

17            And you can go right out that door and behind you  
18    is going to be somebody else that comes in. And they don't  
19    believe in return business because it's a pretty big market  
20    here. And so many times if you complain about something  
21    they say, Well, just don't come back, you know.

22            And so that's something that -- it's only a small  
23    element. I think the great majority of restaurants and  
24    retail food stores try to do a, you know, a good job.  
25    Nobody wants to get sued. I think the average cost for a

1 food-borne illness case now is about -- I think the last  
2 figure I saw was \$80,000 for a, you know, a small  
3 settlement. And it can go even higher.

4 We had one here recently that involved 6,500  
5 people at a deli. And it was a form of E. coli, not the  
6 type that affected, you know, Ms. Donely's son. But it's  
7 going to -- the restaurant's back in business. But I  
8 don't -- they're having trouble getting insurance and what  
9 have you, as you can understand.

10 But that person didn't want that to happen to his  
11 restaurant. It's been in business for 30 some years, I  
12 believe. The family name is attached to it, Eye Wans  
13 [phonetic]. It's been on the news even now. And nobody  
14 wants that to happen to them.

15 But some people run, you know, loose and fancy,  
16 you know, footloose and fancy. And until it happens to them  
17 they don't realize that, you know, it's not a game that  
18 we're in here, you know, with food safety.

19 So anyway, those are my only comments to make.  
20 And thank you.

21 MR. O'HARA: Thank you very much.

22 We have time for one last comment before lunch.

23 Sir?

24 MR. WOLFF: Thomas Wolff. With all the --  
25 everybody who has talked has brought up some very, very good

1 points.

2           What we must realize also is that the water that  
3 is going underground in our water tables is being  
4 contaminated by all the stuff that's going in the ground,  
5 including methoxychlor, which is next thing to DDT, which is  
6 the next thing Agent Orange.

7           It gets into a water table and goes from here to  
8 Kankakee. There's a lot of farms in between, lot of cattle.  
9 There's a lot of milk cows in between. They're drinking the  
10 water coming out of their wells. They're not supplied with  
11 city water.

12           By the way, city water, when they chlorinate the  
13 city water it's used with -- they use chloramine T  
14 [phonetic]. After that goes into the water, a derivative of  
15 arsenic.

16           So, you know, I don't know why we're trying to  
17 fool each other. Let's get back down to brass tacks and  
18 inspect the stuff, put the law down. You got books of laws.  
19 I got the EPA laws here. I got the Health Department laws  
20 here.

21           But what do they do? Do they go into  
22 restaurants -- okay -- well, you can't do this. Out of 100  
23 points they give them 50 points. They fix their 50 points.  
24 They're back in business. Ten days later, the 50 points are  
25 right back again.

1                   You don't have enough people to inspect. You  
2                   don't have enough money to inspect these places. It's going  
3                   to take everybody, not only the EPA, everybody else, to go  
4                   into these places and make sure that they are putting out  
5                   good food, healthy food and not contaminating this food.

6                   People go into these restaurants. They eat.  
7                   Sure, I don't eat at that restaurant, ma'am, so that's one  
8                   thing, okay?

9                   I'm a professional cook. And I've cooked from  
10                  United States to Europe and back. My stringency is this, if  
11                  I catch one of my girls every putting a piece of bread, a  
12                  roll back into the area where those rolls are coming out of,  
13                  I'll fire her on the spot.

14                  How many people here have gone to restaurants,  
15                  sit down, picked up a roll, I don't want that one, put it  
16                  back down? How do I know where that person's hand's been?

17                  You're talking about air-borne diseases. Garbage  
18                  trucks come in and out of the restaurant parking lot.  
19                  People walk in and out of the parking lot. Are the bottoms  
20                  of these garbage trucks clean? They're supposed to be if  
21                  they come off of a landfill. Every truck coming out of a  
22                  landfill has got to be washed down underneath of the  
23                  carriage.

24                  Right, EPA?

25                  (No response.)

1 MR. WOLFF: Am I right?

2 MR. AIDALA: Not our --

3 MR. WOLFF: That's what your book says.

4 MR. AIDALA: Probably the state regulations.

5 MR. WOLFF: In the State of Illinois right now  
6 underground tankage that are leaking -- and this is all  
7 types of tanks, all types, not just fuel, not just fuel  
8 oil -- from some of the medical areas, including Humana here  
9 in Hoffman Estates there happens to be 368 pages in the  
10 State of Illinois alone. On each side is 43 incidents.  
11 Will come out to 15,824.

12 Fine these people a little bit of money. Fine  
13 them 300 bucks every time. Come out to \$47,000,472. Pay  
14 for some more of this investigation.

15 You know, you have a big resource, where if  
16 somebody has an inground leaking tank you give them money to  
17 help them pull it out. Well, number one, you didn't put it  
18 in. They should be paying to take it out.

19 Then a man in Elmhurst who owns two gas  
20 stations -- he sent his last \$10,000 check into EPA day  
21 before yesterday. That's his own fault. Another gas -- car  
22 wash in Elmhurst. It's -- has so much leakage at that car  
23 wash that they had to buy the house behind the place because  
24 the guy had gasoline coming inside the house.

25 Now, this goes down into a water table. Okay?

1 Goes all the way to Kankakee. Depends on what water table  
2 you're in. You go down 2,000 feet you're in another water  
3 table. Methoxychlor leaking in the ground.

4 So -- well, now, the engineers say, Well, it's  
5 okay because it's at a base where it's not going to leak.  
6 But they have structural cracks in that base. So it's going  
7 to leak into the ground someplace.

8 We have to get back to the natural thing here.  
9 When it comes to your farmers, the farmers are taking the  
10 manure, taking it out and spread it on the fields. Helps  
11 crops grow. Then it rains and goes down into the water  
12 table. Because the ground is so saturated with things that  
13 they cannot purify it anymore.

14 You got to get the basic, water. How many people  
15 have city water? Okay? City water. Maybe you live in a  
16 combined community. Your community says, Well, I get X  
17 amount of water out of Lake Michigan, but I don't have a lot  
18 more, so I have to use our wells in order to make up for  
19 that water. What's in their wells?

20 If you're the EPA or you're the Health Department  
21 bear down on these people and stop it. Maybe you won't have  
22 people getting sick.

23 How many people -- you know, it's -- it worries  
24 me when somebody goes in and I see a roll sitting there  
25 that's not wrapped. How many people have touched that roll

1 prior to me? How many times has that bounced off the floor?  
2 That scares me.

3 And, you know, everybody says, Well, it's -- the  
4 food was bad. Maybe it wasn't the food. Maybe it was that  
5 roll. Maybe it was the butter that wasn't kept at 41  
6 degrees. Maybe it wasn't the cream that was kept at 41  
7 degrees. Forty-one degrees is up to 2,006. Until then it's  
8 45 per the Health Department.

9 We got to get back down to basic facts. Make  
10 KISS -- you know, let's Keep It Simple. Let's get people  
11 healthy. When we're bringing food into the United States,  
12 like the lady said, let's make sure that it hasn't been  
13 contaminated with sewage, because that's what they're  
14 growing it with.

15 MR. O'HARA: Thank you very much, sir.

16 We will take a 45-minute lunch break. And we  
17 will start again at 12:30 to go through Questions 4, 5 and  
18 6. And the public comments will start at 2:45.

19 Again, thank you very much for your  
20 participation.

21 (Whereupon, a lunch recess was taken.)

22 MR. O'HARA: The faithful few of us have  
23 gathered. Hopefully, the other people will be getting back  
24 from lunch relatively soon. But to try to keep us on  
25 schedule as much as possible, we are going to start.

1           As I said, we have three more questions. And to  
2   lead the discussion Question 4, Jim Aidala from EPA.

3           MR. AIDALA: And as you can see from the  
4   agenda -- and again, I'll read it -- Question Number 4  
5   regarding the vision is, "What should be the short-term  
6   goals and critical steps to realize this vision." And also,  
7   in contrast, "What should be the long-term goals and steps,"  
8   to realize the vision. So both short term and long term.

9           We're open for comments at this point.

10          Come on up.

11          MS. ALEXANDER: My name is Jane Alexander. I'm  
12   here on behalf of MOO, Milk Outrage Organization. This was  
13   an organization that was formed when RBGH was approved by  
14   the FDA.

15          And we did succeed in getting that milk out of  
16   districts 1 and 2 in the Chicago schools. And then  
17   something political happened and it came right back in. And  
18   also, the farmers were no longer certifying that they were  
19   RBGH free.

20          The other day I went back to speak to an LSC,  
21   Local School Council meeting, to speak about RBGH. And I  
22   mentioned also the hormones in the meat. And I said, You  
23   know, such things are happening as young girls are getting  
24   their period two years earlier than normal; there's a  
25   certain amount of feminization of young boys, the



1     development of breasts.

2                   I do a talk on factory farming. So I hear this  
3     from people. And the question of, you know, Is this why  
4     kids are so big, is this why kids are obese. And I say, I  
5     don't know the answers to all that, I'm not a doctor.  
6     But I hear the questions all the time.

7                   And when I said this to the LSC, the teachers and  
8     some of the parents said, Yes, we know the problem, we have  
9     it. And while it's one thing to read about this stuff, to  
10    have somebody corroborate it face to face is -- was really a  
11    blow to me. Anyway, that's my story with RBGH.

12                  But what do you need to do? All of the --  
13    this -- we're sitting here talking about solutions and  
14    remedies to problems that we have created. And essentially  
15    what all this is being caused by is the corporatization and  
16    the industrialization of agriculture. That is what is  
17    bringing on this whole big mess.

18                  The corporations have taken over the FDA and the  
19    USDA. And I don't mean to be rude, but we call you a  
20    subsidiary of Monsanto and duPont and Dow Chemical and so  
21    forth.

22                  There's a revolving door policy between the  
23    chemical and pharmaceutical companies and our agencies in  
24    Washington. That's why I feel you are no longer acting as a  
25    regulatory agency.

1           What needs to be done and is so hard to get done  
2           is for the USDA to start supporting organic agriculture.

3           Organic is just, you know, contour plowing, using  
4           a manure spreader, crop rotation, so forth. It's just a  
5           fancy name for a decent farming system that is really  
6           concerned about agriculture and not about the amount of  
7           money that you make from agriculture.

8           I think two of the areas and two of the  
9           explanations for all this food problem that we're having in  
10          this country is one, the proliferation of the factory farms  
11          in this country.

12          I find these abominations going around our  
13          country is just so disgraceful. I can't believe that  
14          somebody would say it's okay to go around this country  
15          building open air cesspools. It's just unfathomable for me  
16          that anyone would say that this is okay.

17          The animals in these factories -- I mean, this is  
18          the pollution of your land and your water. And if you're  
19          getting E. coli on red leaf lettuce now it's got to be from  
20          contamination of these factory farms. There's just no other  
21          explanation for it, because it doesn't come from a  
22          vegetable.

23          The animals in these factory farms are just  
24          simply sick. They're chock full, of course, of antibiotics  
25          and vaccines and -- but they have destroyed the immune

1 systems of these animals. These animals can't protect  
2 themselves anymore from anything because their immune  
3 systems are just simply shot.

4 So to say it's all right to factory farm, to  
5 encourage it with all kinds of financial favor to  
6 agribusiness is truly disgraceful, just truly disgraceful.

7 And I think just a brief description of what a  
8 factory farm is is enough to say, Hey, that's not okay.  
9 It's just not okay to do something like that. Our animals  
10 are sick on these factory farms and people are eating this  
11 meat and it is causing sickness.

12 And then, of course, the other thing where these  
13 E. coli outbreaks are coming from is in the slaughterhouses.  
14 The slaughterhouses are too big. When you think that three  
15 companies are responsible for 80 percent of the boxed beef  
16 that is sold in this country, that is enormous.

17 And, of course, the beef is coming from Canada,  
18 from all over. So that if you have an outbreak of some, you  
19 know, pathogen, you can't localize the thing. It goes all  
20 over the country.

21 And the whole purpose in the slaughterhouses and  
22 in agribusiness is profit. So anything goes. Their  
23 viewpoint is not good food, health food, nutritious food,  
24 it's all how do we spend as little as possible to make as  
25 much as possible. As long as we keep on doing that it's

1     pointless to talk about food safety.

2                 So those are the two main issues that I say is  
3     the proliferation of factory farming. We should have  
4     learned from the chicken industry how destructive this is.

5                 Now, of course, even the dairy cows are going  
6     into feed lots. Those cows don't move out of those  
7     warehouses. They stand there day in, day out. They're  
8     milked three times a day. And they stand on those  
9     platforms. They never move. They don't breath fresh air.  
10    They don't have any exercise. They don't have any sunshine.  
11    Of course, the chickens are well known. And now the pigs  
12    are going through the same thing.

13                And of course, they've all been genetically  
14    engineered, as I said, pumped full of drugs. And with this  
15    Animal Drug Availability Act that was passed in '96 drugs  
16    are even more readily available.

17                You can't build on a basis of filth like this.  
18    And this is truly filthy to okay a system like that.

19                Thank you so much for my -- allowing me to speak.

20                MR. AIDALA: Thank you for the comments.

21                Short-term or long-term steps, even though it is  
22    after lunch?

23                Come on up.

24                MR. LEITZKE: My name is Tom Leitzke. I'm with  
25    the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture Trade And Consumer

1 Protection.

2 I believe that some of the steps that we need to  
3 look forward is -- are being developed in concert with the  
4 Association of Food and Drug Officials. And I encourage you  
5 to continue a dialogue with AFDO, which is aggressively  
6 pursuing an integrated national food safety system.

7 There are thousands of state and local public  
8 health officials out there working in food safety today. We  
9 have various levels of expertise, various levels of  
10 knowledge.

11 We need to find a way to integrate the system so  
12 that each level of the system is doing something that  
13 supports the other level, not duplicating the system, not  
14 creating a new system.

15 We have a system in place that can be developed,  
16 that can be improved. And we should move forward towards  
17 that.

18 Thank you.

19 MS. NAGLE: Jaye Nagle. I'm with Kraft Foods.  
20 And I live also here in the suburbs of Prospect Heights.

21 MR. AIDALA: You might want to pull that a little  
22 closer.

23 VOICE: I don't think the mike is working.

24 MR. AIDALA: Well, just pull that a little bit  
25 closer to you.

1 MS. NAGLE: My name is Jaye Nagle. Can you hear  
2 me now? Okay. I'm with Kraft Foods. I also live in the  
3 area, mother of two children and very concerned about the  
4 safety, as I think all Americans are.

5 I just wanted to build on that last comment. And  
6 I would encourage the council, as they continue to move  
7 forward, not only to have dialogues with AFDO, but with, you  
8 know, any number of organizations that have responsibility  
9 across the food chain.

10 And one thing I wanted to mention -- I know Dr.  
11 Okeno -- I saw him in the background here today. The --  
12 Illinois has convened a Food Safety Task Force. And I'm a  
13 member of that, along with many other representatives of  
14 industry, consumer groups, academia and government.

15 And I believe there are other such committees  
16 that exist in other states. I've heard there was one in  
17 Ohio or there may be one in Ohio. I don't know across the  
18 50 states and territories and districts what other ones  
19 exist. But clearly, there's been a lot of good work that  
20 our committee, I think, has discussed, in terms of what are  
21 gaps, what are barriers, what are hurdles.

22 And I would definitely encourage the council to  
23 pro-actively reach out to all states, send out an inquiry.  
24 Are states embarking upon this? What have been your  
25 findings? Again, not to reinvent the wheel, so that there

1     probably are a lot of good learnings across various entities  
2     that are already in place. And I would encourage the  
3     council to look for those.

4             MR. OLSON: Ken Olson, American Farm Bureau. I  
5     guess I would build on this, as well. And I think it  
6     probably relates back to some of the other questions, also.

7             But I think certainly, communications is an  
8     important aspect. We need to communicate between agencies  
9     as far as what is transpiring. Also communications --  
10    facilitate that between the agencies and industry and  
11    consumers, as far as what's going on. And I think that  
12    addresses many of the problems.

13            In looking at long-term things, I think it is  
14    critical to have research. Much of what we've heard today  
15    has talked about problems, rather than looking at solutions.  
16    And I think if we're looking at solutions we need a good  
17    definition of research needs, identification of those,  
18    prioritization.

19            I know there's a conference coming up on Thursday  
20    and Friday of this week looking at that. Do intend to  
21    participate in it, as well. But I think that certainly has  
22    to be a very critical part to better identify what the  
23    agents of concern are, what sorts of management handling  
24    treatment techniques really can reduce the problems so that  
25    we're minimizing problems.

1           So I think we need to focus on that, preventing  
2       problems for the future, rather than strictly regulation and  
3       dealing with problems after the fact.

4           MR. AIDALA:   Thank you.

5           Other comments on this question?

6           Sure.

7           MS. ROBERTS:   I think the short-term goals should  
8       look at designing systems that will transition into whatever  
9       our long-term goals are, which I hope are a single agency.  
10      And so how are you going to design these systems in the  
11      short term?

12           And some examples -- you know, looking at  
13      regulations that are consistent with all foods, which  
14      currently isn't the case.

15           Or the import issue that I talked about earlier,  
16      making sure that imports are regulated on a more consistent  
17      basis. Or use of inspection forces where needed most.

18           I don't know if my numbers are exactly right.  
19      But the fact that there are many more inspectors in USDA,  
20      for example, I think around 7,000 for maybe 6,500 plants,  
21      which gives you almost a one-to-one ratio; but in FDA you  
22      have a much lower ratio, or one to 80.

23           And maybe moving some of those inspectors. Not  
24      getting rid of them because we need them. But having them  
25      being used where they're really needed, if you have limited



1 resources. And looking at those issues of where are these  
2 inspectors needed, for what issues, and which ones are the  
3 highest risk, based on science.

4 I would think in short-term we should work on  
5 getting faster consumer notification of food hazards.  
6 However that's done -- it's not my expertise -- but I think  
7 that there's situations where notification to the consumer  
8 takes 24 or 48 hours. And to me that's too long when you've  
9 got bad food out there that people are potentially eating.

10 I think another short-term goal might be  
11 registration of food plants so that FDA's not having to try  
12 to figure out where they're at. And that wouldn't be  
13 tremendously hard, I wouldn't think, to register all food  
14 plants.

15 And start using the HACCP regulations more and  
16 appropriate technologies, not only in food processing, but  
17 also in the food service industry.

18 And last, continual education of the consumer.  
19 And whatever round that takes, but that's a -- something  
20 that you continue on a constant basis and a short-term goal.

21 MR. AIDALA: Thank you.

22 MS. MULLARKEY: Good afternoon. My name is  
23 Barbara Alexander Mullarkey. I'm here representing myself.  
24 Short-term goals, long-term goals -- I would hope that the  
25 agencies would pay more attention to the public when they

1 complain about what is going on in the marketplace and in  
2 their homes.

3 I have written a book called Bittersweet  
4 Aspartame, A Diet Delusion, which is symptomatic of problems  
5 at agencies, especially the Food and Drug Administration.

6 There have been over 80 independent studies  
7 showing problems with this food additive. And yet the FDA  
8 has taken the attitude that, We're not going to look at it  
9 anymore. In fact, I just had a conversation with Joe Levitt  
10 about this. And he said nothing new is happening.

11 But when over 10,000 people voluntarily call the  
12 FDA with a problem on a food additive how many more are  
13 having problems that don't know they can call the FDA? And  
14 with 92 symptoms at the agency, would you, who's having a  
15 seizure, mood swings, you know, problems with extremity  
16 numbness, would you call the FDA on their volunteer hotline?  
17 Or would you go see your physician or health professional or  
18 go to a hospital?

19 So when 10,000 people voluntarily call an agency  
20 complaining about a problem and nothing is done about it  
21 then that agency loses complete credibility. And that's  
22 what's happening in this country because of this one food  
23 additive. And there are so many other things.

24 The other thing that I'm interested in is the  
25 bovine growth hormone. And I don't understand why this same

1 agency, the FDA, denied opening up the books after they  
2 approved this substance with the USDA and did not release  
3 the study that was the basis for approval, which was a 1989  
4 study done by G.D. Searle for Monsanto. And it showed that  
5 there were growth lesions in the animals.

6 Now, when this product, the bovine growth  
7 hormone, is now in almost all dairy products in this country  
8 unless you are eating or drinking organic products, we are  
9 in problems.

10 So when there is an agency that is supposed to be  
11 regulating the food safety in this country and we have the  
12 callous disregard of the public when they complain, is it  
13 any wonder that we're here today talking about food safety?

14 So I ask you and the agencies, you've got to do  
15 something to restore the public confidence in you . And that  
16 short-term and long-term you've got to pay attention to what  
17 the public is saying.

18 And I, in my 15 years of contacting the FDA on a  
19 consistent basis -- I go back to Jacqueline Burett, who was  
20 the FDA toxicologist who was known at the FDA as No-No  
21 Burett, because when things would cross her desks and she'd  
22 say -- there was not enough science she'd say, No.

23 Just before Jacqueline's death I talked to her.  
24 And I said, Jacqueline, what will we do about the FDA. And  
25 she said, Abolish it, it's useless.

1           So when I hear that from an internal person who  
2       had worked there for years I begin to wonder what are we up  
3       against here. Thank you.

4           MR. AIDALA: Other comments on this question?

5           (No response.)

6           MR. AIDALA: I guess we'll move to Question  
7       Number 5.

8           MS. GLAVIN: All right. Question Number 5 moves  
9       into a slightly different area on this. And the question  
10      is, What is the best way to involve the public in the  
11      development of a long-term food safety strategic plan. What  
12      additional steps besides public meetings would be  
13      beneficial.

14           Obviously, those of you who are here today  
15      believe that public meetings are one way of getting public  
16      input into where we need to go with food safety and the  
17      strategic plan for food safety. Otherwise, you wouldn't  
18      have come today.

19           I think today's meeting also amply demonstrates  
20      the real value of these meetings, in that many different  
21      voices, many different areas of concern can get out on the  
22      table in a relatively short time. So, you know, certainly  
23      public meetings are a important thing.

24           On the other hand, we have -- I'm not good at  
25      crowd estimation, but maybe 50 or 60 people here today. And

1 I know many of you are representing larger groups. So I  
2 don't want to dismiss that.

3 But what other ways can we get public involvement  
4 in developing a long-term food safety strategic plan? And I  
5 guess I'd be particularly interested in people who are  
6 representing larger constituencies.

7 Yes?

8 MS. ROBERTS: Sue Roberts. My understanding is  
9 that the council is only government officials. Correct?

10 MS. GLAVIN: The President's Food Safety Council  
11 is, yes.

12 MS. ROBERTS: Right. Yes, that's what I'm  
13 speaking about. So I would suggest that maybe you have,  
14 like, a consumer advisory board that advises the council on  
15 the strategic plan that you're trying to develop so that you  
16 can get input from the consumers from the -- through that  
17 advisory board.

18 And also, probably another way would be peer  
19 review of the strategic plan as it's being developed at  
20 various stages, whatever -- I mean, I don't know exactly how  
21 that would be done. But I would think that that should be  
22 included in the process that you're going to be going  
23 through.

24 MS. GLAVIN: So putting draft documents out on  
25 the web, that sort of thing --

1 MS. ROBERTS: Uh-huh.

2 MS. GLAVIN: -- for broad comment.

3 MS. ROBERTS: Yes.

4 MS. GLAVIN: Okay.

5 MS. ROBERTS: And then letting us know that  
6 they're there so that we can comment on them. And then  
7 listening to us when we comment.

8 MS. GLAVIN: Well, I said the web, not the  
9 Federal Register. You noticed?

10 MS. ROBERTS: Yes. That's how I got here. So --

11 MS. GLAVIN: Other ideas?

12 Yes. Thank you.

13 MR. SAMUELS: I agree with the comment about  
14 consumer advisory boards or individuals. But I'd like to  
15 elaborate on that for a moment.

16 Number one, even the notice of this meeting was  
17 in the Federal Register. Consumers don't read the Federal  
18 Register. The only reason that some of us are here today,  
19 including myself, is that the Chicago Sun Times had just a  
20 little blurb about this meeting. Otherwise, we didn't know  
21 about it.

22 So I think there has to be a better way of  
23 communicating with the public. And perhaps it is internet,  
24 you know, a concise list of meetings that people can  
25 regularly check to or check or what have you.

1           Or to, in fact, allow a registration of  
2 organizations that have interest to be on some kind of e-  
3 mail list where they can be advised of meetings. That can  
4 be accomplished today very easily.

5           But let's take that a step further and talk about  
6 consumer advocates as part of committees. We have looked at  
7 advisory committees for a number of years now. And when I  
8 see consumer representation they're not consumers.

9           Over and over again the consumer is a professor  
10 of such and such at such and such university that has  
11 contracts with the very industry that's being reviewed. It  
12 is rare, if ever that we have seen a true consumer.

13           I'll tell you quite honestly that someone put my  
14 name in nomination for an FDA committee. And through  
15 Freedom of Information, after being interviewed, I found  
16 that my application was lost and, in fact, two appointments  
17 to that particular committee were representatives of the  
18 glutamate industry.

19           There has to be, if we're talking of consumers,  
20 we have to understand what consumers are. And although this  
21 may be going a little off field and obviously, I realize  
22 I've been critical today, and I think deservedly so, I might  
23 say.

24           But I think I should say something positive, too.  
25 And that is that the current trend is to have advisory

1 committees or to contract with outside agencies, such as  
2 FASEB to review things.

3 When we look at these committees we see over and  
4 over and over again conflicts of interest. And I think it  
5 is a very simple thing that if you're going to have advisory  
6 committees that the government agency establish a definition  
7 for conflict of interest, such as contracts with the  
8 industry that's being discussed and so forth.

9 And it would be very simple to set up standards  
10 of conflict. And that anyone who serves on a committee  
11 regardless if that committee is through a contractor, that  
12 any member of an expert committee be required to sign a  
13 statement of non-conflict that clearly enumerates what a  
14 conflict is.

15 If possible, I'd like to see Congress, in fact,  
16 have a penalty for those who, in fact, have been found to  
17 perjure themselves.

18 I'll be very clear. FDA went to FASEB for MSG  
19 study. And without looking, four out of the eight people  
20 had conflicts of interest. And when that was brought to the  
21 FDA's attention we were told that it wasn't the FDA's  
22 responsibility, that they relied on the contractor for  
23 conflict of interest and indeed, the FDA was not obligated  
24 to accept the findings of the committee.

25 So again, it's fine to have advisory committees.



1 But let's break down the conflict of interest part by just  
2 coming up with a simple statement and a signature from those  
3 people who are not representing the public's interest.

4 Thank you.

5 MS. GLAVIN: Thank you.

6 Okay. Now, we've had two kinds of committees  
7 talked about. One was a consumer advisory committee. And  
8 then you were getting into more the expert committees.

9 Are there other groups that should be represented  
10 on those kinds of advisory committees for developing the  
11 strategic plan or are there other techniques, in addition to  
12 public meetings and advisory committees that could be of  
13 use?

14 There's some back here.

15 And can I -- I've been remiss. I need to remind  
16 you to give your name before you speak for the recorders.  
17 Thank you.

18 MS. ALEXANDER: Jane Alexander.

19 MS. GLAVIN: Thank you.

20 MS. ALEXANDER: I was thinking of the National  
21 Organics Board. That's not the right title. But now when  
22 the USDA promulgated the rules for the organic standards, I  
23 mean, they were just way different from anything that the  
24 board had recommended.

25 The National Small Farms Commission just issued a

1 report, It's Time To Act, I think called report. I don't  
2 know how much attention the USDA will pay to that. The USDA  
3 ignores so many suggestions and input that is coming from  
4 citizens already. I don't know what the point of it is,  
5 really to have if you're not going to pay any attention to  
6 the information.

7 Also, I really don't think it's the  
8 responsibility of the consumer for food safety. I think the  
9 consumer has enough to do managing his own life that he  
10 should have to be involved with the safety of his food. He  
11 should be able to rely on it.

12 And I think it is the responsibility of the USDA  
13 and the regulatory agencies to make sure that he does have  
14 safe food. Thank you.

15 MS. GLAVIN: Yes?

16 MR. SAMUELS: I'd like to change my mind. And  
17 this may be way out. But C-Span. There are two channels of  
18 C-Span. I don't know if it's possible, but wouldn't it be  
19 wonderful in the area of food safety, since that's a major  
20 concern and a presidential edict, so to speak at this point.

21 Would it be possible on something like C-Span to  
22 have a regularly scheduled, you know, half hour program to  
23 keep people apprised of what is happening, of meetings of  
24 this type, you know, just sort of a news presentation show  
25 so that people would know that every second Friday at 8:30

1 p.m. there will be a half-hour discussion of food issues on  
2 the table?

3 Then we'd have an informed public. Maybe we  
4 don't want an informed public. But that would be one way of  
5 clearly informing the public and getting greater input than  
6 you're getting now.

7 MS. GLAVIN: Okay. Thank you for that.

8 Terry?

9 MS. MULLARKEY: Barbara Alexander Mullarkey. For  
10 instance, when you're having hearings like this, I would  
11 suggest that you would have it in an area where people could  
12 get there on public transportation. This was very, very  
13 difficult to get to.

14 Second thing is would there be any type of a  
15 meeting where there could be discussion between people in  
16 the agency and people who came to give their input? I've  
17 been to many of these meetings and there isn't any. And  
18 then it's very difficult to find out whatever transpired.

19 Is it just window dressing or -- I mean, are the  
20 people here giving their ideas and their input -- I mean,  
21 does it mean anything or is it just a day spent, you know?

22 MS. GLAVIN: I can, out of my own experience,  
23 answer your first question. And that is that one of the  
24 earlier meetings in this series was in Sacramento. And we  
25 had very low attendance. And because of that, which we were

1 a little disappointed in -- but because of that we got  
2 everyone at the table and really did have a dialogue back  
3 and forth.

4 You know, when you get a larger group that gets  
5 much more difficult to do just because of time constraints,  
6 et cetera. But, you know, it's an interesting idea to maybe  
7 do some one way, some another way, some large meetings,  
8 where everybody gets to, you know, sort of present a view  
9 and then some smaller ones with more of a dialogue.

10 Because that was a very different meeting. There  
11 weren't anywhere near the range of points of view expressed.  
12 But it was very interesting in its own way and good in its  
13 own way.

14 So I -- that's a good suggestion. Thank you.

15 Mr. Dockerty?

16 MR. DOCKERTY: Yes. Am I on here? Just to --

17 MS. GLAVIN: Can you give your name, please?

18 MR. DOCKERTY: Yes. I'm sorry. Terry Dockerty,  
19 National Cattlemen's Beef Association. Just to respond  
20 really to your question and what other groups need to be  
21 involved, there are certainly a number of industry  
22 organizations that have programs dedicated to the food  
23 safety issues.

24 One that I'm mostly involved with is Beef  
25 Industry Food Safety Council. I think that that

1 organization should be -- that activity should be part of  
2 the process.

3 You know, the National Restaurant Association has  
4 a new national Food Safety Council, which I think should be  
5 part of this process and integrated into it as well.

6 Dr. Glavin is here today from AVMA. I think some  
7 of their activities, as well, relative to live animals  
8 should be integrated into the process, as well.

9 So I just wanted to respond and get that on the  
10 record that I think there is a place for those types of  
11 groups, as well as consumer groups; not to imply that we're  
12 not searching for the same goal.

13 MS. GLAVIN: Okay. But with different expertise  
14 to bring to the table.

15 Yes? And please give your name.

16 MR. WOLFF: Thomas Wolff. I notice when we came  
17 in we signed in today. And I stopped by the table again and  
18 talked to the ladies if they needed my address. I was under  
19 the presumption that anything that went on here today and  
20 with the questions and answers that you would be getting  
21 back to us.

22 But I notice that you don't have to fill out  
23 anything with your address. That means that you're not  
24 going to get back to us with anything?

25 MS. GLAVIN: Well, there -- we -- first of all,

1 we are having the meeting recorded, as you know. So the  
2 proceedings will be available. We will not be sending them  
3 to everyone, but they will be available.

4 And, in addition, we want, to the extent that  
5 people are willing to give it, names and addresses so that  
6 as we continue through this we can get back in touch and let  
7 you know what else is going on.

8 So if you haven't left your name and address, you  
9 might rethink that?

10 VOICE: We have phone numbers and fax numbers,  
11 and when we have things to send, we will contact you and get  
12 your addresses [inaudible].

13 MS. GLAVIN: Okay. Could everyone hear that?  
14 Great.

15 Yes?

16 MR. OLSON: Ken Olson with Farm Bureau. I think  
17 that, as I said before, communications is critical. I guess  
18 as you're developing the strategic plan, one question would  
19 be what type of input are you really looking for.

20 I think in looking at food safety you need to  
21 focus on the science involved. And so for developing a plan  
22 you probably need to focus in that direction.

23 I know that there was an allusion to or an  
24 indication of the organic standards. There were 200,000  
25 comments, I believe. I'm not sure what you would do with

1 200,000 comments, relative to a strategic plan. So that  
2 makes it very difficult to use.

3 What I think is you're looking at a strategic  
4 plan. You need to make sure that it's scientifically valid  
5 and focus on that part.

6 Now, there needs to be communication to  
7 consumers, as far -- and the public, everyone. And I think  
8 farmers and ranchers are public and consumers, too. They're  
9 consuming the same products, so they've got the same  
10 concerns as everybody else. But communicate that. But  
11 it's probably two different levels of communication, as  
12 well.

13 So I think focusing on some of the food safety  
14 councils, some of the researchers for developing the  
15 scientific basis is critical. But then also, making sure  
16 the public's aware of what's going on.

17 And I think the fact that everyone is concerned  
18 about producing a safe and abundant food supply for us is  
19 another critical part of it.

20 MS. GLAVIN: Thank you.

21 Other ways of getting the public involved? Other  
22 suggestions on perhaps some important voices that haven't  
23 been heard from? We certainly have had a very good consumer  
24 representation. We've had some of the producer groups here,  
25 the AVMA.

1           Are there a number of state and local health  
2 officials, partners in the food safety world? Are there  
3 other groups that should be at the table who you've noticed  
4 are missing?

5           MS. BUSSARD: The Illinois -- Connie Bussard.  
6 The Illinois -- what is it -- Governor's Task Force on Food  
7 Safety did have a representative from the wholesale food  
8 distributors. And I feel that they're an important link.

9           I don't think in Washington or here I really  
10 heard from wholesale food distribution area. And I think  
11 that's a really important -- that's such a big link in the  
12 chain, that those are people who really should be at the  
13 table, also.

14          MS. GLAVIN: Okay. Thank you for that.

15          Uh-huh. I think I have one more. And then I  
16 think we're ready to move on to the next question.

17          MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you for allowing me to  
18 speak. I'm Christine Phillips. I would just maybe as a  
19 capsulating comment, like to make sure -- I think it's  
20 evident from this meeting that there are a lot of different  
21 interests and there are a lot of different problems.

22          And I don't think it is fair, I don't think it is  
23 adequate to take a reductionist look at the problem. I  
24 think food safety is all encompassing. Yes, that's messy.  
25 But it's the only way that a real dialogue can be started.



1           It is evident from the variety of topics and  
2       concerned that there are lot of different things you need to  
3       be looking at. Thank you.

4           MS. GLAVIN: Thank you.

5           Well, I will pass it on to the next question.

6           MS. GLAVIN: Before we go to the next question,  
7       if I could do sort of an unscientific survey of how we got  
8       people here today. How many people learned about this  
9       meeting from a notice in a newspaper, such as Mr. Samuels?  
10      How many learned about it from reading that every popular  
11      document, the Federal Register?

12           My gracious, we -- just goes to show you what  
13      happens when you ask a question.

14           How many learned of it from either a trade  
15      association or if you're a member of a consumer group from  
16      your consumer group newsletter? How many learned from the  
17      state and local health officials or AG officials here? How  
18      many learned about it through your normal communications  
19      with --

20           What means of communication have I not mentioned  
21      that we found out?

22           VOICE: Government agencies contacting other  
23      agencies.

24           MR. O'HARA: Okay.

25           VOICE: I think -- I'm Theresa Stref [phonetic]

1 from C-FAR -- originally from [inaudible].

2 MR. O'HARA: I was going to say a banked shot.  
3 This was helpful. I mean, it gives us a sense of what seems  
4 to be effective and what other -- and also, the various  
5 comments people made were very thoughtful and will give us  
6 some new ideas.

7 If I could now turn it over to Joe Levitt from  
8 FDA for the final facilitated question.

9 MR. LEVITT: Thank you.

10 Part of the charge to the President's Council is  
11 to evaluate and respond to the National Academy of Sciences  
12 Report ensuring safe food from production to consumption.  
13 And I'm sure that most of you here are familiar with that  
14 report. Dr. Potter's holding up a copy of it. It's a red,  
15 white and blue cover that we've all become familiar with.

16 That report contains six recommendations, even if  
17 it looks like there's three, because some of them are kind  
18 of broken in half. If you'd look in the package that I  
19 think many of you picked up on the way in, you'd know it by  
20 the blank green cover. That's how it is labeled.

21 The actual last sheet in that package is a re-  
22 statement of the conclusions and recommendations of the  
23 National Academy of Sciences report. And I won't read them  
24 all verbatim, having directed you to look at them.

25 But just in general, the first one talks about

1 facing the food safety system on science. The second one  
2 talks about Congress changing the federal statutes to  
3 address a number of the issues that exist.

4 The third one talks about doing a comprehensive  
5 plan, civil -- probably what we're calling our strategic  
6 plan. The fourth one talks about the issue of what here is  
7 called the Uniform Framework, but oftentimes is talked about  
8 as a single food agency issue.

9 And the final one talks about the tools to be  
10 sure that there is an appropriately unified approach at the  
11 federal, state and local level.

12 So those are the five specific. I'm not going to  
13 go through and ask one by one. But just to alert you that  
14 these are the recommendations from that report and to elicit  
15 some discussion now on people's reactions to them.

16 Yes, right down here. Please identify yourself  
17 and --

18 MS. NEWSOME: Thank you. I am Rosetta Newsome,  
19 [inaudible] food scientist with the Institute of Food  
20 Technologists, the IFT.

21 IFT is a 28,000 member society of food science  
22 and technology. IFT very much appreciates the opportunity  
23 to be here in this public forum to provide input to the  
24 Strategic Federal Food Safety Plan and to comment on the  
25 recent report ensuring safe food from production to

1 consumption.

2           Regarding that report, there are several  
3 conclusions and recommendations that came out of the  
4 committee that are consistent with the guiding principles  
5 for oversight of food safety that IFT recently developed.

6           These guiding principles were endorsed by 13  
7 other scientific societies. The consistency in that report  
8 and the guiding principles developed by IFT include several,  
9 such as basis of the food safety system on science and risk  
10 assessment, taking into consideration the cost and benefits  
11 of regulation; flexibility to allow timely responses to  
12 innovations in science and technology; consistency of  
13 regulations among federal agencies and at local, state,  
14 national and international levels; strong research programs  
15 emphasizing both short and long-term issues and including  
16 basic and applied components; and centralization of food  
17 safety activities.

18           ITF stated in its guiding principles that  
19 consistency and oversight and regulation would be enhanced  
20 of responsibility for food oversight were focused in a  
21 single policy or regulatory unit that tightly adhered to  
22 objective criteria and risk analysis.

23           And I'll leave copies of that guiding principles  
24 document for any of those here that may be interested in  
25 picking up a copy. Thank you for the opportunity to

1 comment.

2 MR. LEVITT: Thank you.

3 Other comments on reaction to the Academy of  
4 Sciences report?

5 Yes?

6 MS. ALEXANDER: Jane Alexander. I have to laugh  
7 at this sound science. I've been following, you know, the  
8 hog farm issue, for example, in Illinois. And every other  
9 word is based on sound science.

10 I want to know where the science is in these hog  
11 farms. Is digging a pit a science? This has become a catch  
12 word. It's pretty meaningless to keep on saying sound  
13 science.

14 And there's another issue I want. I think the  
15 other question you have to ask is whose science are you  
16 talking about? Monsanto's science? duPont's science? Eli  
17 Lilly's science? Whose science are you talking about? Are  
18 you talking about the science at the universities, the land  
19 grant colleges, which are dependant on funds from  
20 corporations? That's another kind of science in our  
21 country.

22 So I would say whose science? And when we say  
23 science, what in the world are we talking about, anyway.

24 Thank you.

25 MR. LEVITT: Yes. Next. Please.

1 MS. ROBERTS: Sue Roberts. I -- when I read the  
2 NAS report I actually thought it was a very good report.  
3 And I thought the recommendations were very good.

4 And my only other comment about it was that I  
5 hope that it can be implemented in a timely fashion. Those  
6 recommendations are very good. There's thoughtfulness put  
7 into the report. And as soon as some of those  
8 recommendations can be implemented, I think we'll have a  
9 safer food supply in the United States.

10 MR. LEVITT: Thank you.

11 Yes?

12 MR. SAMUELS: I don't want to be redundant, but I  
13 think the term sound science is a very dangerous term.  
14 Because in fact, industry has the money to support science.  
15 And the science that they arrange for certainly is not  
16 science that's going to go against them. I think all of us  
17 know that, even the agencies.

18 Consumers are not in a position to fund science.  
19 So, you know, as I said earlier, I do think that agencies  
20 such as the FDA should be appropriated funds and have the  
21 facility to do some of their own science.

22 But also, there has to be some sense used here.  
23 As Barbara Mullarkey, I believe, mentioned, 10,000  
24 reports -- to say that they're meaningless is insulting to  
25 people.

1                   And in the case of MSG, for example, every  
2     headache clinic in the country says that MSG is a trigger  
3     for a migraine headache. And indeed, there is a study that  
4     found it a trigger for migraine headache.

5                   And yet the FDA and the agency they contracted  
6     with never, ever mentioned migraine headache and do not  
7     contend that migraine headache is triggered by MSG because  
8     it doesn't fit their mold of mild and transitory.

9                   Now, are we -- am I, as an individual, supposed  
10    to go out and do a scientific report to say now there is  
11    science? This is nonsensical. We're hiding behind what is  
12    called good science.

13                  In the area of FDA -- I mean, MSG the FDA has  
14    relied and continues to rely on studies funded by the  
15    industry from 1978 through 1994 in which reactive placebos  
16    were used. The FDA refused to act against the people that  
17    were using reactive placebos; when pushed, finally concluded  
18    that they used quote poor judgement. And it won't be done  
19    again.

20                  So the people who funded those scientific reports  
21    have changed to an equally misleading, if not fraudulent  
22    material that's being used in studies. And now the FDA will  
23    rely on those studies.

24                  And so science is being used as a vehicle against  
25    the best interests of consumers. And I think someone has to

1 sit down and identify what is sound science.

2 I'm embarrassed when a representative of the EPA  
3 tells me that glutamic acid is an essential amino acid. I'm  
4 embarrassed when an official of the EPA doesn't know the  
5 difference between amino acids that are bound in protein in  
6 long chains versus individual amino acids that are taken --  
7 separated out of protein and ingested separately.

8 All of these things that I'm embarrassed with  
9 have been taken from quote sound science that someone has  
10 laid on these people's desk.

11 If the agency doesn't have the ability to  
12 understand what sound science is, they should get outside  
13 help and that help should not come to them through the  
14 agency that's being reviewed.

15 So I caution that there has to be some  
16 modification of this quote need of sound science. We cannot  
17 have sound science for every condition that is caused by MSG  
18 or for that matter, from aspartame.

19 And to say it doesn't exist because there is  
20 nothing in the books at the present time is just absolutely  
21 ludicrous and shows a lack of interest in public safety.

22 People from different coasts of the country that  
23 independent report the same condition have not conspired to  
24 advise the FDA or the EPA that, you know, they're having a  
25 problem.



1                   So I would like something to be done as it  
2                   relates to this requirement of sound science. It's much  
3                   overstated.

4                   And also, I might say it sickens me to keep  
5                   hearing double blind studies because it appears to me that  
6                   industry has done a wonderful job of using the double blind  
7                   study to, you know, deceive both the agencies and the  
8                   public. And it's a definition that I think as to be looked  
9                   at with jaundiced eye.

10                  MR. LEVITT: Thank you.

11                  Other reaction to the academy report? I notice  
12                  there are --

13                  Yes, right over here.

14                  MS. GALVIN: Hi. Elizabeth Curry Galvin again  
15                  from the American Veterinary Medical Association. The AVMA  
16                  wanted to comment that they were unhappy that the NAS report  
17                  failed to recognize the food safety importance of  
18                  continuance antemortem and postmortem inspection.

19                  The AVMA feels that these are science based and  
20                  there is real food safety value to continuance antemortem  
21                  and postmortem inspection.

22                  Continuous inspection would complement pathogen  
23                  reduction in HACCP plans. When you look at antemortem  
24                  inspections there are some things that you'll find and  
25                  diagnose on an animal. And that's the only opportunity you

1 get to diagnose such things, like maybe heavy metal  
2 toxicities or other neurological diseases.

3 And I believe in 1996 that when you combine the  
4 antemortem and postmortem inspections that resulted in 83  
5 million animal and poultry carcasses being condemned, either  
6 for reasons of disease, contamination or adulteration. And  
7 to add to that pile there were an unknown number of  
8 carcasses that were trimmed.

9 So our point would be that it was through these  
10 types of inspection that these types of food safety hazards  
11 were absorbed and kept from the food supply.

12 So the AVMA would want to be on record as  
13 opposing what was mentioned in the NAS report, and that is  
14 the failure to recognize the science between continuous  
15 antemortem and postmortem inspection.

16 Furthermore, we'd add that we would strongly urge  
17 that no action be taken to transfer any kind of  
18 responsibilities from federal employees to industry on this  
19 continuous inspection until the HACCP plan has been  
20 demonstrated to really result in cleaner, safer food that's  
21 less likely to cause food-borne illness.

22 We would support that these rules and  
23 responsibilities for continuous inspection could move from  
24 federal employees to industry. But we feel at this point in  
25 time that HACCP is really occupying the time, the effort and

1 the energy of both government and industry.

2 And we would think it would be a bad time, a  
3 dangerous time to try to change anything that has to do with  
4 continuous inspection at this point. So we would urge that  
5 once that -- all those ducks are in a row, so to speak, that  
6 then maybe changes might be considered.

7 The AVMA would like to make one more comment.  
8 And that is that we would urge that FSIS continue to study  
9 and look at pilot projects that demonstrate those most  
10 effective uses of inspection resources.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. LEVITT: Thank you very much.

13 I noticed a few moments ago, when Jim O'Hara was  
14 asking how people found information, there were a relatively  
15 large number of state and local health officials here. To  
16 the extent that one of the recommendations talks about state  
17 and local, would any of you like to comment on that? Don't  
18 have to.

19 MR. LEITSKE: I'll hobble up here one more time.  
20 tom Leitske from Wisconsin Department of Agriculture.

21 We support any efforts that the Council takes to  
22 involve state and local public health officials in these  
23 activities. We believe that it is an impossible task for  
24 the federal government to attempt to go this alone.

25 And I'm very pleased to see the information

1 coming out relating to local and state agencies at this  
2 time. Because I remember back to the first draft of the  
3 President's Food Safety Initiative, which basically said  
4 state and locals don't do nothing.

5 And that's not true. We do the work. Who do you  
6 think does it? So I encourage you. Please, we are here.  
7 We want to work with you. We want to integrate a system and  
8 do the best job we can for everyone.

9 Thank you.

10 MR. LEVITT: Yes. Down here.

11 MS. BUSSARD: Connie Bussard. I just want to,  
12 once we establish the definition of sound science, I  
13 heartily endorse recommendation 3(b) -- 3(a). Back that  
14 out. Change that -- (a) and (b), but particularly (a).

15 MR. LEVITT: If there are no other comments, I  
16 think I will turn the microphone back to Mr. O'Hara. Thank  
17 you all very much.

18 MR. O'HARA: Since are running ahead of schedule,  
19 rather than taking a break, what we propose to do is to go  
20 straight to the public comment session and wrap things up a  
21 bit sooner than we would have otherwise.

22 So that having been said --

23 Terry, do you have the list of --

24 I think the first speaker -- and if I could again  
25 remind you that even though we are ahead of schedule, we'd

1 still like for people as much as possible to keep their  
2 comments succinct. So there is a five-minute time limit.

3 Mr. Leonard Harris from the Food Marketing  
4 Institute.

5 MR. HARRIS: Good afternoon. My name is Leonard  
6 Harris. I'm the owner of a supermarket on the south side of  
7 Chicago. And I'm also a member of the board of Food Market  
8 Institute.

9 So certainly, we are very much concerned with the  
10 question of food safety. After all, we're the end of the  
11 chain from farm to supermarket. That's where the customer  
12 comes to get his food supplies. And we're the ones that  
13 they look to for safety.

14 The long chain includes the suppliers, as well as  
15 federal, state and local government. So I guess because I'm  
16 close to this committee, your being here in Chicago, FMI is  
17 located in Washington, D.C., they requested that I would  
18 represent the industry and make a short, brief report.

19 I can say that on my way out here from Chicago  
20 with the wind blowing as hard as it is, my -- I was more  
21 concerned with road safety than I was food safety.

22 In recent years we have heard of food-borne  
23 illnesses, illness outbreaks that have been associated with  
24 imported products.

25 As the Congress and this council consider ways to

1     improve the safety of the nation's food supply, one  
2     conclusion that I am certain will be reached is that steps  
3     must be taken to streamline the system for inspecting  
4     imported products, primarily produce, meat and seafood.

5             In addition to creating a better system, it is  
6     apparent that we must put greater resources at the ports of  
7     entry to implement an improved system.

8             At the first public meeting of this council on  
9     October 22 FMI's president, Dr. Tim Hammond [phonetic]  
10    offered a solution that I believe can be implemented in the  
11    short term and meet the need for greater resources without  
12    increasing costs.

13            The critical need for additional personnel can be  
14    met by redeploying to ports of entry existing food safety  
15    and inspection services, in-plant inspectors freed from  
16    their current duties by the modern HACCP analysis critical  
17    control points inspection system for meat and poultry.

18            When this new inspection system is in place FSIS  
19    will no longer need its current complement of inspectors.

20            Spring of thousands of staff hours for use in  
21    other areas of food safety. These resources can  
22    significantly improve the safety of our food supply by  
23    helping ensure that contaminated foods do not enter the  
24    United States.

25            This re-deployment can easily be accomplished

1 through a cross-utilization program between Department of  
2 Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration. That  
3 would allow for the sharing of resources to inspect imported  
4 produce and seafood.

5 However, should cross-utilization not prove  
6 feasible the same goal can be met by transferring statutory  
7 authority for inspecting imported produce from FDA to USDA  
8 or by transferring FSIS inspectors to FDA for reassignment  
9 to port entry.

10 This proposal does not advocate one approach over  
11 another, only that the inspection resources be redeployed to  
12 where they can best protect consumers.

13 One of the best features of this proposal is that  
14 it would not require additional tax dollars or user fees.  
15 It would be revenue neutral, since the government would be  
16 shifting resources and expertise that already exists.

17 I understand that this proposal could meet  
18 resistance from within the government, as well as from  
19 industry.

20 The merit of this proposal and others should be  
21 debated. However, debate that fails to reach a constructive  
22 conclusion serves no one's interest. We all have the same  
23 goals. Let's achieve it as quickly and as efficiently as  
24 possible. My customers expect and deserve nothing less.

25 Thank you.

1 MR. O'HARA: Thank you, Mr. Harris.

2 Is Marion Newport with us?

3 MS. NEWPORT: Yes. I'm Marion Newport. And most  
4 of everything that I've heard from this side of the room in  
5 general has been my beliefs, as well.

6 I've looked around the room and quickly assessed  
7 that I'm probably one of the oldest people here. I've  
8 birthed nine children, raised eight to adulthood. And daily  
9 I see the advantages of pursuing the natural line.

10 It -- I just beg you to look beyond your science,  
11 as has been pretty well shot through here. Remember that at  
12 one time the prevailing science was that the earth was flat.

13 There is a science right here in my middle that  
14 tells me when things aren't right. And man, things are not  
15 right. This kinship or togetherness of our federal  
16 government and the drug companies -- it's money. You know,  
17 money, money, money, money. I just would like to see a real  
18 concern.

19 You said you met in Sacramento, California.  
20 You're meeting here in the Chicago area. You have a meeting  
21 coming up in Dallas. What about the other -- what are  
22 there, 47 states? I mean, you're just not hearing from  
23 enough people.

24 I -- you know, I really don't have much more to  
25 say, other than just -- you've just got to almost break the



1 whole thing apart and start over from the beginning. And --

2 MR. O'HARA: Okay.

3 MS. NEWPORT: That's pretty much it.

4 MR. O'HARA: Thank you very much.

5 Mr. Samuels, would you like --

6 MR. SAMUELS: I think I said pretty much what I  
7 wanted to say.

8 MR. O'HARA: Okay. That's fine.

9 MR. SAMUELS: Thank you for the opportunity.

10 MR. O'HARA: Surely.

11 Ms. Alexander.

12 MS. ALEXANDER: I just want to very briefly  
13 reiterate that we just simply must get back to agriculture  
14 in this country. We cannot go on with this agribusiness and  
15 money. It is destroying us. Because there is never any  
16 consideration for the effect of what they do. It is all  
17 about the bottom line. We have got to get back to  
18 agriculture in this country.

19 Thanks very much.

20 MR. O'HARA: Thank you.

21 Ms. Alexandra Mullarkey?

22 MS. MULLARKEY: Yes. As one who eats, I want  
23 organic, nutritious vegetables, grains, fruits and herbs.  
24 Foods that do no harm and are free of genetic engineering,  
25 irradiation, pesticides, sewer sludge, vaccines, synthetic

1 additives, sprays, for instance, Oxigrow [phonetic], toxic  
2 water.

3 For meat eaters I ask for humane animal care and  
4 also meat free of the above list and free of filth, bacteria  
5 and viruses, free of antibiotics, free of animal-based feed  
6 contributing to mad cow disease. We need for mad cow  
7 disease testing in downer [phonetic] cows.

8 Our government has to promote and enforce honest  
9 labels for altered foods. I agree with Rob T. Fraily, co-  
10 president of Monsanto's Agricultural Sector, who yesterday  
11 in Chicago said that he favors labeling of genetically  
12 engineered foods. He stated, Consumers need to have choice.  
13 And he emphasized the need for information in the hands of  
14 consumers.

15 And I also ask are three public hearings adequate  
16 to get input into food safety in this country? Thank you.

17 MR. O'HARA: Thank you very much.

18 That is the list of people who signed up and  
19 asked to speak during the public comment period. But we  
20 clearly have some time if there are people who would like to  
21 say some final words. We'll just start from that side of  
22 the room and go across.

23 Ms. Roberts?

24 MS. ROBERTS: Getting late in the day so I've got  
25 to put my glasses on. This would be -- I'd like this to be

1 my final comments.

2 As American citizens we rely on our government to  
3 guaranty safe food, nutritious, while free of pathogens,  
4 free of unhealthy chemicals, such as animal drug residues or  
5 free of physical hazards. I truly believe this is not being  
6 done very effectively now, as documented in the NAS report.

7 In addition, in many ways the American food  
8 system shows signs of running amok, from excessive  
9 processing of wholesome foods.

10 I believe the President's Council must  
11 strategically plan for national food safety in an all-  
12 encompassing manner addressing issues of not just microbial  
13 or -- I'm sorry -- microbiological pathogens, but issues  
14 such as nutrition quality, biogenetic engineering,  
15 education, modified food components, animal drug residues,  
16 intentional and unintentional food additives and  
17 environmental sustainability.

18 The NAS report is a very good report. They  
19 acknowledged they did not look at all issues. This needs to  
20 be done by the President's Council on Food Safety as they  
21 develop their strategic plan for a national food safety  
22 program.

23 However, the recommendations of the report should  
24 be implemented in a timely fashion. A new national food  
25 safety program, both legislation and administration, is

1 needed in the United States.

2 My hope is that government agencies and  
3 legislators can work cooperatively. This is not the time  
4 for turf battles at the expense of American citizens. The  
5 dialogue that we've heard today must continue and hopefully,  
6 action will be taken.

7 Thank you.

8 MR. O'HARA: Thank you.

9 Anyone at this side of the table?

10 Oh, I'm sorry, Ms. Bussard.

11 MS. BUSSARD: I'm sorry. I thought when I sent  
12 in my -- had somebody call in, I was on the docket to speak.  
13 But I will, anyway, as you well know.

14 The Illinois Council on Food And Agriculture  
15 Research thanks you for the opportunity to present comments  
16 today.

17 I'm Connie Loker Bussard, a registered dietitian.  
18 I currently serve on the board of directors of that  
19 organization as the Illinois Dietetic Association's  
20 designated organizational member.

21 I now recall this now from C-FAR. It's easier.  
22 We are a coalition of consumer, commodity, farm,  
23 conservation and other stakeholder organizations and  
24 individuals who work on a consensus basis, which is always  
25 interesting to watch, to achieve the mission of C-FAR.

1           This mission is to secure resources to adequately  
2   fund relevant and high quality research and related research  
3   outreach programs that lead to profitable, consumer  
4   sensitive and environmentally sound food and agricultural  
5   systems in Illinois and in the nation.

6           Public confidence is fostered through  
7   participation in planning and evaluating the process and the  
8   impact of research activities.

9           In 1993 C-FAR began to identify five research  
10   focus areas. And if you want to know what they are, on the  
11   back of the handout that I gave you we've got the five areas  
12   listed.

13           And then we began to develop priorities within  
14   those five areas in 1955 when legislation was passed that  
15   provided funding for this research, which is by fiscal year  
16   2000 to reach \$15 million. And we had -- our new governor-  
17   elect has promised to put this within his budget for the  
18   first year, which was fine.

19           These five focus working groups were active in  
20   soliciting public input and reviewing food and agricultural  
21   problems in Illinois -- or excuse me -- food and agriculture  
22   research.

23           By 1997 we had a visioning process. And through  
24   that we developed some critical long-term research problems  
25   in Illinois.

1           So out of our five working areas we developed  
2     five very strategic research initiatives known as SRIs. And  
3     one of these was food safety. It's a combination group  
4     with -- it's food safety slash function of foods, which were  
5     two priority issues in nutrition, especially.

6           These extremely unique feature of these SRIs is  
7     not only are they outcomes-based, but they're multi-  
8     disciplinary, collaborate research efforts with measurable  
9     outcomes.

10           The mission vision statement of the food safety  
11     SRI states that consumers will have confidence in the foods  
12     they ingest, that the foods they ingest will be safe and  
13     that our research will lead to safe and healthy foods.

14           This dovetails perfectly with the National Food  
15     Safety Initiative because I looked at some of the  
16     initiatives that were in there. And we did ours separately  
17     from those. We came to the same conclusions.  
18     And you'll see that we're already working on many of the  
19     recommendations of the report.

20           In conclusion, the Illinois Council on Food and  
21     Agriculture Research commends the Council's effort. We are  
22     willing to work in collaborative outcomes-based efforts to  
23     solve -- and I really want to stress this because I've heard  
24     today the comment that you or they, the council -- and it's  
25     sort of a like a we-they relationship. And until all of us

1 look at this as our very own common problem that we all have  
2 to solve it won't get done.

3 So I look at this as solving our common problems  
4 of providing food that is safe, healthy and affordable.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. O'HARA: Thank you very much.

7 Yes. I think -- are you Ms. Clark?

8 MS. CLARK: Yes.

9 MR. O'HARA: Ms. Clark is next please.

10 MS. CLARK: First I'm going to have my son speak.  
11 His name is James Clark.

12 MR. CLARK: My name is James Clark. And I'm from  
13 Illinois and I am nine years old. I have food and latex  
14 allergies.

15 Last summer I took one bite of a salad at a  
16 restaurant and I started to have an anaphylactic reaction.  
17 My throat started to close, and I could not breathe well.  
18 We discovered that the salad had been made using latex  
19 gloves.

20 It is very hard to know where latex is and isn't.  
21 Food that has been touched by latex looks the same as food  
22 that has not been touched by latex.

23 I need your help in obtaining access to safe  
24 food. When my parents ask managers at restaurants to use  
25 only non-latex gloves, we have been told that the restaurant

1 must by law use latex gloves. We have also been told that  
2 latex gloves are safe to use. I know that isn't true. But  
3 most people handling food in America do not know that latex  
4 gloves are dangerous and that food should not be touched by  
5 latex gloves.

6 I need the FDA and USDA to help me live. Please  
7 use those -- please help those of us with this disease and  
8 help stop others from getting this disease by banning this  
9 possible latex gloves in the preparation and handling of  
10 food.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. O'HARA: Thank you very much.

13 MS. CLARK: Hi. Thank you for letting us address  
14 you. My name is Ann Clark. I'm the mother of a nine year  
15 old boy with multiple food and latex allergies.

16 I face a daily struggle to provide safe food for  
17 my child. An error in judgement or in misinformation about  
18 food ingredients could quickly compromise the health or life  
19 of my child.

20 Through constant vigilance and the knowledge of  
21 the limited foods James can safely eat, I have been able to  
22 safeguard his welfare. Yet there's a hidden element that is  
23 quickly entering the food processing chain that has  
24 compromised the life of my child and millions of others who  
25 have the disease, latex allergy.



1           The widespread and commonly accepted use of latex  
2 gloves in the food manufacturing and food preparation  
3 industry deposits this hidden element, protein onto  
4 otherwise safe food.

5           If this compromised safe food is eaten by latex  
6 allergic individual a sever anaphylactic reaction may occur.

7  
8           The American College of Allergy and Immunology  
9 has declared latex allergy to be at epidemic proportions.  
10 Researchers estimate up to 18 million Americans suffer from  
11 latex allergy. The percentage of people with latex allergy  
12 rises dramatically, up to 17 percent in industries where  
13 latex glove usage is routine.

14           Presently the lifetime cost of occupational latex  
15 sensitization for American health care workers is  
16 conservatively estimated at 64 billion. Medical research  
17 has shown that latex protein aerosolizes when powdered latex  
18 gloves are used.

19           Anaphylactic reactions have occurred from  
20 breathing the air contaminated from powdered latex gloves.  
21 OSHA has declared occupational asthma, often a complication  
22 of latex allergy, to be one of the top 18 preventable work  
23 place problems.

24           The use of latex gloves in the food service and  
25 manufacturing industries is a dangerous practice. There are

1     viable, non-latex alternatives available.

2             Not only does constant use and exposure to latex  
3     gloves compromise the long-term health of workers, the  
4     general public is unsuspectedly and constantly exposed to  
5     latex protein that remains in food. The deposit of latex  
6     protein in food through the use of gloves is in effect an  
7     unregulated and undocumented additive to food.

8             As the FDA has done an effective job in the  
9     control of additives and the documentation of additives in  
10    food, it must now safeguard the food processes with latex.

11            NIOSH, a sister agency to the FDA, has issued a  
12    strongly worded alert that recommends that the employers  
13    provide non-latex gloves to all workers where there is  
14    little potential for contact with infectious materials.  
15    Those alerts are not being widely distributed. And  
16    restaurants often do not know of the recommendations.

17            Our family asks the federal government to ban the  
18    use of disposable latex gloves in all the food manufacturing  
19    and food preparations to safeguard America's food supply.

20            Thank you.

21            MR. O'HARA: Thank you very much.

22            Ms. Newsome?

23            MS. NEWSOME: Thanks. As a regulatory agency --

24            MR. O'HARA: If you could just identify yourself,  
25    please?

1 MS. NEWSOME: Okay. Rosie Newsome with the  
2 Institute of Food Technologists. As the regulatory agencies  
3 increase their collaboration this provides opportunity to  
4 harmonize the scientific basis of public policy.

5 Increased communication among the regulatory  
6 agencies allows for consistency and the scientific grounding  
7 of public policy.

8 While IFT values application of sound scientific  
9 knowledge and principles, we acknowledge that other factors  
10 such as economic impact and other trade offs are part of the  
11 policy making environment.

12 IFT further recognizes that as policies evolve  
13 resources need to be devoted to partnering with state and  
14 local officials. And while we focus on priorities for  
15 domestic policy, we should not lose sight of the importance  
16 of international harmonization of science-based policy.

17 IFT strongly supports commitment from the highest  
18 level of the U.S. government for involvement in activities  
19 of the Codex Alamaterias [phonetic] Commission.

20 IFT supports the participation of highly  
21 competent agency scientists in explaining government policy  
22 to consumers as a way of building confidence and educating  
23 the public about what the government is doing to ensure food  
24 safety.

25 Government scientists can win the respect of the

1 public when describing the agency's efforts and the basis of  
2 those efforts to ensure food safety.

3 Our efforts to ensure food safety must also be  
4 sufficiently flexible to allow us to move quickly to develop  
5 new strategies to deal with changes in human ecology, host  
6 susceptibility and pathogens themselves.

7 And finally, in our earlier comments to you on  
8 the development of a federal strategic food safety plan, we  
9 noted that several areas of critical research need. I won't  
10 repeat those. But simply note that they included the need  
11 for innovative pathogen control methods, the need for better  
12 microbial detection and identification methods and better  
13 understanding of the evolution of microbial virulence.

14 Thanks.

15 MR. O'HARA: Thank you very much.

16 Seeing no other hands raised or --

17 Ms. Nagle?

18 MS. NAGLE: Jaye Nagle. And I'm making this  
19 comment actually on behalf of AMI, the American Meat  
20 Institute. And I know that this comment was sent previously  
21 to FSIS. But given this forum, I thought it would be an  
22 appropriate opportunity to raise it and call it to your  
23 attention.

24 AMI is very pleased to work with the President's  
25 Food Safety Council in advancing food safety in any regard

that we can -- that they can be helpful. And AMI supports the vision of the seamless food safety system as you've described it today, in terms of prevention in farm to table integrated research surveillance inspection and enforcement to enhance consumer protection and confidence.

6 And specifically, we just wanted to call to your  
7 attention that a key priority that the council might want to  
8 consider taking on is the harmonization of the food recall  
9 policies.

10           This has not been discussed yet today, but I know  
11       there's been a lot of discussion about it separately. And  
12       since there are some key differences between the food recall  
13       policies between FDA and FSIS, AMI believes that it would be  
14       a very good forum to bring some of those differences for  
15       discussion and to look for suggestions from the council in  
16       order to work together to harmonize those policies.

17                   And AMI would wish to consider to work with you  
18       in that regard. And I just wanted to call that to your  
19       attention today.

20 Thank you.

21 MR. O'HARA: Thank you very much.

22 Ms. Donely, we are finished. We are actually  
23 ahead of schedule. And we are doing public comment. You  
24 had signed up. You had wanted to make a statement. And I  
25 just wanted to give you that opportunity.

1 MS. DONELY: I've changed my mind. Thank you.

2 MR. O'HARA: Okay. Thank you.

3 MS. DONELY: Oh, actually -- I just want to make  
4 a couple of recap comments.

5 MR. O'HARA: Sure.

6 MS. DONELY: And actually, where I left off --  
7 and I really apologize for missing the balance of the  
8 meeting.

9 I really think we do need to remember that this  
10 is first and foremost the goal is for the public health and  
11 safety. And if we can just keep that in mind as we go  
12 forward with this, in that we're looking to really focus on  
13 food safety.

14 Where we broke before lunch was on the discussion  
15 on additional -- or gaps and barriers. And it goes back --  
16 and this is to another over arching point, if you will. And  
17 it's -- we talk about the farm to table food safety  
18 strategy.

19 I can't emphasize enough that where we really  
20 want to -- if we want to take an approach to this, is we  
21 really want to interfere or prevent at the very initial  
22 point of any types of food-borne illnesses that we can. And  
23 I can't emphasize enough that that would be at the farm  
24 level. We have a tremendous gap there right now.

25 In addition to -- within the animal itself. And

1 we are now seeing animal origin pathogens showing up in  
2 fresh produce. The problem there is because it's in the  
3 manure that is being used as fertilizer, as one -- that's  
4 another gap, as we do not have a federal or an integrated  
5 manure management system.

6 So that's another gap I'd like to identify --  
7 that we need to be having some sort of regulations in place  
8 on just how manure can and should be used.

9 And then a couple others that I think could have  
10 an immediate effect on our food safety. And that would be  
11 to implement a trace back and trace forward system that  
12 would build in immediate accountability to food producers,  
13 manufacturers, handlers, all down the continuum.

14 Because what would happen in a trace back system  
15 and trace forward is you now can be identified. Too much of  
16 our food is food that can -- there's no -- if there's no  
17 brand name on it you're anonymous.

18 If we went into something where identification  
19 codes would be on every step along the way that it could --  
20 we could do trace backs and trace forwards, I think we'd  
21 build an immediate on help into the food safety system.

22 MR. O'HARA: Thank you very much.

23 I would like to take this opportunity to thank  
24 all of you again for taking the time out of your busy days  
25 to share with us your views. I think that we can clearly

1 say that this is an issue that concerns all of us. This is  
2 an issue where we all have roles to play.

3 And I would especially like to thank you all  
4 today for challenging some of our assumptions. That's  
5 important, as well.

6 And it was a very thoughtful, it was a very  
7 provocative day. It's a day that I think I can safely say  
8 all of us representing the federal agencies, as well as the  
9 state and local agencies, have learned today.

10 And we appreciate you for doing that. Thank you  
11 very much.

12 (Whereupon, at 2:08 p.m., this meeting was  
13 concluded.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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3 MEETING OF: President's Council on Food Safety

4 LOCATION: Schaumburg, Illinois

5 DATE: November 10, 1998

6

I do hereby certify that the foregoing pages,  
7 numbers 1 through 144, inclusive, are the true, accurate,  
8 and complete transcript prepared from the verbal recording  
made by electronic recording by Carol Dawley.

Diane Orman 11/24/98

(Transcriber) (Date)

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